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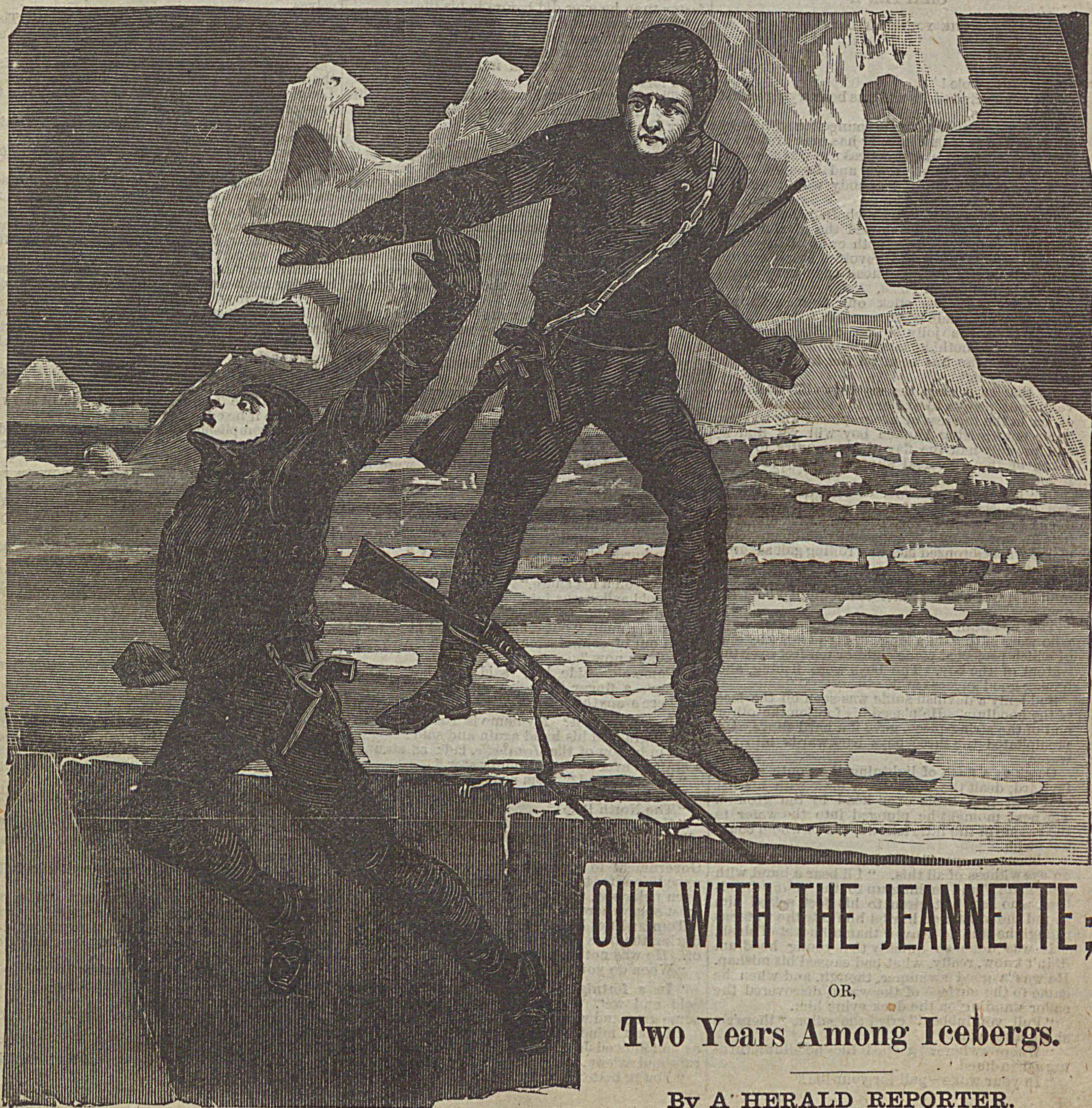
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Vol. I



OUT WITH THE JEANNETTE;

OR,

Two Years Among Icebergs.

By A HERALD REPORTER.

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OUT WITH THE JEANNETTE;

OR,

TWO YEARS AMONG ICEBERGS.

By A HERALD REPORTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG SAILOR.

THE Pole!
The North!

The North Pole!
The whole civilized world has been trying to find it for centuries.

The most singular thing in connection with every effort to find it is that nobody has ever pretended that it could be of any practical use when found. It could not be pulled down and brought away like any other pole, and nobody would want it just where it is.

The fact is, no one knows whether there is any pole there. Somebody started the idea, several hundred years ago, that both ends of the axle-tree on which the world revolves stuck out on each side of the globe. Those ends were called the North and South Poles.

How far the Poles stick out no man knows. What they are made of no man can tell.

Jack Cole, the jolly bo'son of the *Jeannette*, says they are nothing but mountains of ice, and every man who has been on the hunt for them thinks he is right.

Be that as it may, the mystery still leads adventurous people to explore the illimitable fields of ice in the interest of geographical knowledge. Some enterprising Yankee boy will yet find it, and proudly nail the flag of his country to it in token of the universal supremacy of the Great Republic.

One day in the summer of 1879, in the city of San Francisco, a jolly tar was walking along the docks in a leisurely sort of way. Just ahead of him he saw a youth of apparently eighteen years of age, whose bronzed face and rolling gait savored strongly of salt water.

The youth was quietly engaged in watching the maneuvers of a San Francisco hoodlum, about his own age.

The hoodlum was watching three small boys who were sitting on a long string-piece, one end of which projected some eight or ten feet over the waters of the bay. The boys were fishing, and having good success at it.

Suddenly a devilish smile was seen on the face of the hoodlum. He placed his foot on the other end of the string-piece, gave it a hard shove, and precipitated the three boys backwards into the water.

Quick as a flash of lightning the youth sprang forward, dealt the hoodlum a blow with his fist that sent him heels over head to the ground. The next moment he plunged into the water to the rescue of the little fellows, one of whom could not swim.

"Blast my eyes!" exclaimed the tar, who was an eye witness of all this. "I'll bear a hand with you, mate!" and rushing up to the young hoodlum, who had just risen to his feet, seized him round the waist, and hurled him into the water as though he was no heavier than a bucket of slush.

It was done so quickly the young hoodlum didn't know, really, what had caused his mishap. He was a good swimmer, though, and when he came to the surface of the water, discovered the sailor standing on the dock eyeing him.

"Pull, you lubber!" cried the sailor, "there's a shark after you!"

"Where—where?" gasped the hoodlum, turning ashen-hued.

"In your wake—pull for your life!"

The hoodlum did pull, and climbed on the pier faster than he ever did before in his life.

"Where's der shark?" he asked of the sailor, looking round and down at the water.

"On land, you lubber!" replied the salt, giving him a shove that sent him into the water again head foremost.

"That's right, mate!" cried the youth, with one of the boys in his grasp, "throw him to Davy Jones' locker!"

"Aye, aye, lad, that I will!"

"Bear a hand here and take the lad up."

"Aye! come—up with you!"

The sailor reached down his great browned hand, caught the little fellow by the wrist, and lifted him up on the dock again. The other two boys, being good swimmers, had already climbed out.

A minute later the young sailor himself had climbed upon the dock, and shook himself, as does a Newfoundland dog when he comes out of a bath.

"Shiver my timbers, mate!" exclaimed the tar, extending his hand to the youth, "I like the way you served that lubber."

"And you threw him back when he came out," said the young man, grasping the sailor's hand. "He ought to be keel-hauled every day for a week."

"Aye, and I'd like to bear a hand at the job," said the other.

The three boys ran away, and the hoodlum having found out that the two sailors were not his special friends, swam to another pier and made his escape by that way.

"What ship do you belong to, mate?" the tar asked of the young sailor-looking youth.

"No ship," replied the gallant young fellow. "I am hard ashore, and can't get away."

"Stranded?"

"Aye—on a lea shore."

The old sailor was interested.

"I did belong to the ship *Oscar*," added the young man, "but it has been condemned and taken out of commission in this port. All hands are ashore now."

"Come alongside, lad," said the other. "You can have a finger in Jack Cole's locker as long as there's anything in it."

"Jack Cole, is it? My name is Tom Durham." Jack grasped his hand again and said:

"I'm bo'son of the *Jeannette*, lad; as staunch a craft as ever skimmed blue water."

"Where bound?" Tom asked.

"To the North Pole," was the reply.

"The North Pole?"

"Yes; the *Jeannette* Polaris Expedition," replied Jack, and then he told Tom all about Mr. Bennett's offer of the vessel to the United States Government to send the vessel on an exploring expedition to the North Pole, in search of an open polar sea, which some people supposed to exist somewhere up there.

Tom had not heard of it, as he had been at sea during the time the expedition was most talked of. He was not well posted just at that time.

"When do you sail?" he asked of Cole.

"In a fortnight. Blow me, lad, but you're cold and wet. Come over the way and have some grog and warm yourself."

"I don't mind being wet, mate," replied Tom, as he followed Jack across the street to a restaurant and saloon.

"You're better dry, though," said Jack, as he

led the way to a table, where they seated themselves.

Some hot toddy took the shivers out of Tom, and then he stood by for a meal which the bo'son ordered served.

The result of the meeting was Tom promised the bo'son to go with him to Commandant de Long, who was to command the *Jeannette* on the voyage.

"He'll ship you, lad—just the man he wants," said Jack.

"Hanged if I wouldn't like to go," said Tom, thoughtfully.

"Of course you would," said the bo'son, "and we want men who will stand together, and not be afraid of water, ice, or polar bears."

"That's me," said Tom, laughing. "I never tackled a bear, but I don't think I'd be the first to run if we met one."

"Shiver my timbers, lad!" exclaimed the bo'son, bringing his heavy hand down on Tom's shoulder, "I know you wouldn't!"

They ate heartily, and by the time they were through Tom's clothes were pretty well dried. He was too much used to such duckings to mind them much.

At the urgent invitation of Jack Cole, the jolly bo'son of the *Jeannette*, Tom went with him to see Lieutenant de Long, the commander of the vessel, to see if he could not ship for the voyage.

That accomplished officer received them kindly. The bo'son stated their errand in a few words, adding:

"He's of the right stuff, sir, as I know—a regular young sea-dog, sir."

"Glad to hear that, bo'son," was the reply. "We don't want any inexperienced hands, you know."

"Ay, sir," said the bo'son, "he's as tough as a polar bear," and the old salt squirted a gill of tobacco juice out of his mouth.

"I fear you are too young, Mr. Durham," said the officer. "How long have you been at sea?"

"About four years, sir."

"You went to sea quite young."

"Yes, sir."

"Ran away from home, I suppose, to follow a roving life."

"No, sir; I had no home."

"Indeed!" and the gallant officer began to be interested in the young sailor. "How is that?"

"My parents both died when I was six years old," was the reply, "and then I took to the streets and sold papers. I had no relatives living, so I had to shuffle for myself."

The gallant De Long's eyes filled with tears. He grasped Tom's hand and said:

"I like a man who meets life that way. You can go with us. The bo'son will show you where your quarters are."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom, turning to follow the bo'son out of the room.

"Stay a moment!" called De Long. "You will need many things not usually required on ordinary trading voyages. Have you any money?"

"I have one-quarter of my wages on the *Oscar*, sir," he replied.

"Spent the other three-quarters in port, eh?" and the experienced officer glanced slyly out of the corners of his eyes at him.

Jack colored up, but replied promptly, looking him full in the face:

"No, sir, I sent it to New York."

"To New York! You have no relatives living, you said."

"I sent it to Benny Havens, sir."
 "Excuse me, Mr. Durham, but will you be so kind as to tell me who Benny Havens is?"
 "Yes, sir. He was my pard when I was selling papers in the streets of New York. He was run over by a stage on Broadway, and had his leg cut off. He and his little sister, who was just twelve years old then, were about to starve. I gave them all my money to take care of them. She is now going to school, and Benny is going to be a lawyer, and—"

"God bless me!" exclaimed honest Jack Cole, the big tears dimming his eyes. "I've sprung a leak, sir!" and he darted out of the office, leaving Tom and the officer alone together.

The story of the disposition of his money touched the heart of the gallant De Long.

"Mr. Durham," he said, "here's a twenty-dollar gold piece. Send it by express to Miss Havens, as a present from me, and hereafter count me your friend under all circumstances."

Tom was thunderstruck.

"Take it, sir, and follow the bo'son."

Tom took the coin and backed out of the office, following the bo'son.

CHAPTER II.

AMONG THE ICEBERGS.

OUTSIDE Tom found the bo'son blowing like a sea-horse to keep down his emotions.

Sailors are proverbially tender-hearted, and honest Jack Cole was a type of the true son of the sea.

The devotion of the young sailor to his two young friends in New York had touched him in a tender spot, and given Tom Durham a place in his affections from which nothing could displace him.

He tried to keep up a hearty bluster as Tom came out, and said:

"I'll show you your berth and chest. Come along."

They went down to the dock where the *Jeannette* lay. Tom found her to be a bark-rigged steamer of some four hundred and twenty tons burthen, with a saucy look about her that pleased him.

The bo'son went aboard and introduced Tom as one of the crew. The second officer, Lieutenant Crisp, received him kindly.

Old Captain Dunbar, a tough old whaler, who was going out as ice-pilot, took a fancy to him at once, as did Professor Newcomb, the taxidermist of the expedition—all because of his extreme youth and his manly bearing.

Tom was well pleased with his quarters, and asked:

"Do I go as a regular seaman, bo'son? I would like to know."

"Blow me, lad, I don't know," was the reply.

Professor Newcomb asked him if he had signed yet.

"No, sir," he replied.

"Then, don't till I see you again, please. I'll see Lieutenant de Long after awhile and tell him my views."

"Aye, sir," responded Tom, and then he turned away and asked the bo'son:

"Who is he, bo'son?"

"That's the taxidermist of the expedition," replied Jack.

"Taxy what?"

"Taxidermist," repeated Jack.

"What in the name of slush does that mean, bo'son?"

"A taxidermist is a man who catches birds and stuffs their skins, so as to keep 'em looking like they are still alive."

Tom looked at the bo'son in profound silence for several moments, and finally asked:

"What does the bird-stuffer want of me, bo'son?"

"Blow me if I know, mate."

An hour later Professor Newcomb called on Tom again and said he had seen Lieutenant de Long. "I would like to have you as my assistant," he added. "You are young, active, enthusiastic, and just the man I want. You will have no seaman's work to do, but go with me wherever I go, in search of all kinds of polar fowls, specimens of which I wish to carry back with me to New York. The lieutenant has given his consent, if you agree to it. What say you? The pay will be double that of a seaman."

"Then I will go, sir. I want the money. That's what I am working for," and Tom shook hands with the professor to bind the bargain.

The man of science was very proud of his assistant when the bo'son gave him the small bit of his history he had come into possession of.

Under the advice of Captain Dunbar, the old whaler, Tom procured such things as he would need in a land of perpetual snow and ice.

At the end of the fortnight the *Jeannette* was ready to sail. Everything had been done to her that was thought necessary for such a voyage.

It was known that every vessel that had been lost in the Arctic Seas—so far as heard from—had been crushed between two gigantic icebergs. "Nipped" was the term used, and it was thought that the hull of the *Jeannette*, being wedge-shaped, would cause her to be lifted out of the water if caught between two icebergs, and let down again when they parted.

Many vessels, gayly decorated with flags and streamers, having on board hundreds of the best people of San Francisco, accompanied the *Jeannette* down the bay and out through the Golden Gate into the illimitable Pacific.

Tom had no relatives or friends in San Francisco, hence he shed no tears of regret when the gallant vessel bore him away on the perilous voyage.

The first weeks of the voyage were uneventful. The *Jeannette* left San Francisco on the 8th of July, 1879. It was midsummer, and the weather was all that one could wish. Balmy, breezy weather, and yet so charming as to disarm even the most thoughtful.

They skimmed along the coast many hundreds of miles, passing the mouth of the great Columbia river in Oregon, which supplies almost the whole world with canned salmon. Then up along the coast of Alaska, that vast, dreary country Uncle Sam had paid the Czar of Russia \$7,000,000 for.

Tom saw that winter was coming rather early, as the *Jeannette* was going a great deal more than half way to meet it. He noticed great changes in the length of the days and nights, and the formations of the coast, as well as the character of the fishes in the briny deep.

While he got acquainted with everybody on board, Tom seemed to cling to the bo'son as the one in whose society he found the most delight.

"What do they want to do with the North Pole when they find it, bo'son?" he asked one day, as they were standing side by side on the deck watching a school of strange fish which kept even pace with the vessel.

"Blow me if I know, lad," was the reply. "They just want to know what it is, I s'pose. Between you and me and the smoke-stack there, mate, I don't believe's there's any pole. Leastwise, they won't ever find it."

"Then what's all this expense for?"

"Oh, some believe it," replied the bo'son, stowing a huge quid of tobacco away in the left side of his mouth.

That night a full moon was shining, and, though it was August, the air was frosty in the extreme.

Tom was below and about to turn in when the bo'son called him up. He lost no time in getting on deck.

"What is it, bo'son?"

"Icebergs," replied Jack, pointing over the starboard side of the vessel.

Jack did not have to point twice. What seemed a mountain to our young hero lay only a quarter of a mile away from the *Jeannette*. It seemed to be at least a mile long and fully five hundred feet high.

"Bo'son," he asked, "is that ice?"

"Nothing but ice, lad."

The mountain appeared quite dark, like one of earth and stone, except where a smooth surface reflected the rays of the moon, and then streaks of silvery light flashed vividly before the eyes of the crew.

As the *Jeannette* was in motion, these flashes of light continued for some time.

Tom was filled with awe, as he had never seen an iceberg before. He could not take his eyes from that mountain of ice. An irresistible longing to get on it and feel the sensation of floating with it took possession of him.

"Well, Tom," said the professor, coming alongside of him, "what do you think of that?"

"I think there's been a big freeze somewhere up here, sir," he replied, at which the professor burst out in a loud laugh.

Captain de Long asked the cause of his merriment. When told, he too smiled, and then remarked:

"I guess that one out there is a thousand years old."

Tom opened his eyes and pricked up his ears. Captain de Long had been in the Arctic regions before, and knew something about ice and the formation of icebergs.

"That's a ripe old age, captain," remarked the professor.

"Yes, but it may not be half or one-fourth that age," returned the captain. "The water continually eats it away, as it is always warmer than the ice. But then the nine or ten months of winter increases its bulk again. That one must be four or five hundred feet high. Some idea of its size may be had by a little calculation. Seven feet remains under water to raise one above the

surface, hence that one must be something over 3,000 feet under the water."

Tom gave a low whistle, expressive of his profound astonishment. Unlike the learned professor, he had not read of such things in books of Arctic travels.

"Such icebergs as that," continued the captain, "never melt away in the Arctic Ocean, as they gain more in winter than they lose in summer. They keep on increasing in bulk till they break and drift apart. Many get into certain currents and drift southward into warmer water, when they gradually succumb to solar heat and melt away."

Tom thought the iceberg before him could make several trips round the world, but he did not say anything.

"I have seen two icebergs like that rub together," continued the captain, "with such force as to make more noise than would come from a battle-field of ten thousand combatants, with musketry and artillery. It could be heard distinctly thirty miles away."

Tom looked out over the dark waters under the pale moonlight at other icebergs, and mentally remarked:

"I'd like to see a fight between two of you."

After a while the *Jeannette* passed the icebergs, and then Tom retired below again.

A short time after that they passed through Behring Strait, a narrow channel that separates Northern America from Northern Asia, and pushed forward into the great Arctic Ocean.

Ice—ice was everywhere, and right before them lay an immense field that seemed bent on disputing further passage to the north.

Captain de Long stopped the vessel's course and waited till a passage could be found. As far as the eye could reach, a rugged coast of ice was in view, about which were seen many strange Arctic fowls.

"Captain," said Professor Newcomb to Captain de Long one day, "I'd like to get some of those birds. They appear to be a strange species."

"Take a boat, professor," replied the captain, "and go after them. You have all the day for that purpose."

"Can the bo'son go with us?"

"Yes. He'll take charge of the boat. Captain Dunbar will go with you as ice pilot."

"Thanks, captain," and the professor hurriedly made preparations to go ashore on the ice.

Tom put on his ice shoes at once. Ice shoes were made with sharp pointed nails projecting from the heels and soles, to prevent slipping on the ice.

The professor carried his fowling-piece and bag with him, and not being used to salt water, was lowered into the boat with a great deal of nervousness on his part.

CHAPTER III.

A TERRIBLE DANGER.

UNDER command of the bo'son the boat pushed off and pulled for the nearest point of the field of ice that presented a hope of affording a landing.

Captain Dunbar was the first to spring upon the ice, and Tom was the first to follow him. The professor came next.

"This is the first iceberg I was ever on," said Tom, looking around over the immense field of solid ice, "and it doesn't seem natural a bit. I can't see the other end at all. Underneath is the sea, and as far as the eye can see is rough, rugged, mountainous ice."

Bang! went the professor's gun, and Tom's fur cap flew off his head.

The professor had fallen on the ice, notwithstanding his ice-shoes, and his gun had accidentally discharged, part of its contents going through the crown of Tom's cap.

Tom took in the situation at a glance, and determined to have a laugh on the good-natured professor.

He staggered away a few paces and sank down on the ice, as though wounded unto death.

"Great hurricanes!" gasped Captain Dunbar, almost paralyzed at what he thought was a fatal accident.

"Blow my eyes!" cried Billy Barker, a seaman, who had come with them.

"I'm jarred from head to heel," groaned the professor, getting on his feet again.

"Jarred!" roared Dunbar. "How do you think he feels?" and he pointed to Tom, lying as still as death on the ice.

The professor glared with open mouth. He was so overcome that he sank down again, gasping:

"My God! my God!"

"What's the matter, professor?" Tom asked, scrambling to his feet again, looking as smiling as ever.

Dunbar, the professor, and Barker gazed at him as if he were one from the dead.

"Blast my eyes!" exclaimed Barker.

"Great Neptune!" ejaculated Dunbar.

"You—you—aren't—dead, are you?" stammered the professor.

"I hope not," said Tom, smiling; "but I've been too near it to feel comfortable. What kind of a fowl did you take me for, any way?"

"Whew! What a scare you gave me!" exclaimed the professor, wiping the cold perspiration from his brow. "I declare, I feel weak as a kitten," and he looked it too.

Tom laughed heartily and said:

"You ain't used to hunting on the ice, professor. I wish you would let me carry your gun for you."

"Oh, you want to get a shot at me, do you?"

"I guess not. I want to be safe, that's all."

"Yes, let him carry it, professor, said Dunbar.

"Yes, or me, professor," put in Barker.

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed the professor. "Do you think because I stumbled once I'm going to shoot all of you in detail?"

"I don't think you shot at my tail, professor," said Tom, "but you came near blowing my head off. Just look at my cap."

Dunbar and the professor fairly roared, during which time the sea fowls, which had been disturbed by the shot, began to hover around and above them again.

The professor was a good shot.

He raised his gun and fired at a large bird of the gull species, and brought him down.

"That's a good shot!" cried Tom, running forward to secure the bird. He found it in a crevice of the jagged ice, where it had fluttered.

It fought desperately, but Tom soon caught it by the neck and brought it to the professor.

"It's a fine specimen," remarked the taxidermist, proceeding to reload his gun. "I'd like to get another one. I see some of a lighter color which must be the males."

"The white ones are males," said Dunbar.

"Well, I'll try for one of the white ones," and a minute or two later he brought down another with a broken wing.

Tom secured that, and then the flock moved westward, frightened by the two shots.

"Let's go over there toward that peak of ice," said the professor, pointing toward a sharp peak that rose abruptly out of the great field of ice, like a rocky peak among mountainous spurs.

"It's only a mile away," said Dunbar, leading off. "Come ahead, but be careful how you carry that gun."

"Better go before," suggested Tom, "so we can see when to dodge."

"Never mind about this gun," replied the professor. "I guess you won't have any reason to be afraid hereafter."

They toiled along over rugged bowlders of ice till they reached the foot of the icy peak. There the professor shot several times, but secured only one bird.

"They are tough and rather hard to kill," remarked Dunbar.

"I should say so," returned the professor.

"Ah! that fellow up there is a good mark," and he quickly aimed at a large bird that had settled on the brow of the peak above him.

It was some two hundred feet high. But the shot killed the bird, and it fell back fluttering in the agonies of death.

"By George," exclaimed Barker, "it has lodged up there!"

"Yes. I wonder if we can get it?"

"Oh, yes, you can climb anywhere with those shoes, if you only know how," said Dunbar.

"Then I'll go up there," replied Tom; "I'd like to see how far this iceberg extends."

"You can get a good view up there, I guess," said the professor, looking wistfully up as though he would like to ascend himself.

Tom commenced the ascent, stepping from one jagged bowlder to another, catching on with a small iron hook to steady himself.

To his surprise he found but little trouble in making the ascent, and Barker concluded to follow him.

"Come up, professor!" Tom cried, on reaching the top; "it's a splendid view up here."

Barker reached his side a few minutes later, and was quite demonstrative in his admiration of the view. On the right was the *Jeannette*, scarcely a mile away, and on the left lay an immense field of ice, and the open sea beyond.

"I can see open water over there, professor!" cried Tom, pointing across the great iceberg.

"How far away?" the professor asked.

"About four or five miles, I should guess," was the reply.

"I'll come up and take a look," said Professor Newcomb; "Captain de Long will be interested in that."

He then commenced the ascent.

"Be careful, now," said Dunbar; "if you should lose your footing you would get a hard fall."

"I am careful," replied the professor, climbing steadily upward.

He reached the top at last, and was gazing at the open sea in the distance, when he heard an exclamation from Dunbar from below.

Looking down, they were horrified at seeing an immense polar bear making for Dunbar.

"Shoot him! For God's sake shoot him!" cried Dunbar, taking to his heels.

The professor quickly aimed, and discharged both barrels of the fowling-piece at the monster, peppering his hind quarters with duckshot.

The sting of the shot caused the bear to turn, with a hoarse growl, and start up the side of the peak.

"Great Heavens!" gasped Tom. "He's coming up here!"

"Load quick, professor!" almost screamed Barker, frantic with fear. "Shoot him, or we are gone, as sure as fate!"

The professor was so excited himself that he could not reload the piece as fast even as he ordinarily could.

Dunbar fled over the rugged ice as fast as his heels could carry him, yelling at the top of his voice:

"Bo'son! bo'son! the boat! the boat!"

The bo'son heard him, and commenced rowing in his direction.

In the meantime the bear had moved around to a side of the peak where it was perfectly smooth down to the water's edge.

Aided by his sharp, steel-like claws, the bear climbed steadily up the smooth surface. He was at home in such places, and he seemed to have a smile on his face as he looked up at the three men.

For God's sake hurry up, professor!" cried Tom, as the bear came nearer and nearer each moment.

"In another moment!" cried the excited professor, ramming home the charge.

He had put in a double charge, but made the mistake of putting both in the same barrel.

"Now!" he exclaimed. "Get out of my way!"

Barker and Tom leaped back, and the professor fired.

Of course the gun exploded, and the bear wondered what all the fuss was about.

The gun burst all to pieces, and kicked the professor into a cocked hat.

The concussion, however, loosened the cake of ice they were standing on—some twenty or thirty tons weight, probably—and the whole piece started down the inclined plane toward the bear, increasing in impetus as it went.

Of course the bear was carried along with it, and the whole slide plunged into the water with a splash that was heard on board of the *Jeannette*, where Captain de Long was watching them through a ship's glass.

Barker and the professor were thrown into the water. The bear went down with the cake on top of him.

Tom reached out and caught the professor by the collar and pulled him on the cake, more dead than alive. Barker was a good swimmer.

"Give me a hand, mate!" he cried, and Tom took his hand and drew him on the ice.

Just as he had drawn Barker safely on he heard a splash, a growl, and felt the ice jarred.

Looking around, he found the irrepressible bear had come to the surface and was trying to get on top of the ice with them.

"Heaven save us!" he gasped. "If he gets on we are gone!"

The gun was at the bottom of the ocean. He had no weapon but his sailor's knife, such as is carried by all sailors.

The sharp claws of the bear would pull that side of the cake down, and then he would lose his hold.

This caused a rolling motion of the cake that nearly precipitated all three into the water.

"Our only hope is to blind him!" cried Tom, drawing his knife and lying down on the ice.

"I can reach him with my knife," and then he crawled forward toward the edge of the rocking cake of ice.

CHAPTER IV.

A DESPERATE FIGHT FOR LIFE.

THE situation was a perilous one.

The professor and Billy Barker were nearly dead from cold, as their wet clothes had frozen stiff on them within two minutes after they came out of the water.

Besides they were bruised in a dozen places, for it hurts as much to strike against ice as against stone.

The professor was really unable to stand on his

feet, so he kept his position prone on the ice, as did Barker.

Their clothes being wet they froze to the ice-cake they were floating on. In fact, they were stuck there and could not move an inch.

To that fact they owed their lives a few minutes later.

Tom crept forward, knife in hand, to prevent the monster polar bear from climbing on the cake of ice. As good fortune would have it, the edge of the cake was smooth, which prevented the bear from getting anything like a good claw-hold.

Still he managed to get hold sufficient to pull down that side, which caused the other side to tilt up considerably.

"Oh, Lord!" gasped the professor, vainly reaching out for something to brace himself against, "we'll slide right into his mouth!"

"God help us!" ejaculated Billy Barker.

But to their astonishment they stuck fast—anchored to the ice as securely as if they had been nailed there.

"Hold fast!" cried Tom, as he held back by sticking his knife in the ice. But for that weapon, he would have slipped right against the bear's head.

When the bear's claw-hold slipped, the cake of ice, relieved of a ton weight on that side, rebounded, and almost threw Tom over on the other side.

By the aid of his knife he saved himself from slipping off again.

The bear came up growling, and reached up an immense paw to try another hold.

Quick as a flash Tom plunged his knife through the bear's paw.

The monster uttered a fierce growl and jerked his wounded paw away. He came near jerking Tom off the ice with it, as he held on to the knife with deathless tenacity.

"Better go away from here, my white friend," said Tom, "you'll be troubled to get a dinner here, I guess. Oh, no, not this time!" and Tom braced himself with the knife again just in time to keep from sliding right into the jaws of the beast.

"Be careful, Tom!" cried the professor; "if he gets on here we are gone. I am stuck to the ice here, and I can't move an inch to defend myself."

"So am I," added Billy Barker.

"And I am almost frozen myself," replied Tom, shivering. "But the bo'son is coming. We will soon be all—"

The monster reached up again and almost reached Tom's head with his steel-like claws.

Tom struck out at arm's length, and succeeded in splitting the bear's nose. That made him terribly angry. He uttered a tremendous roar and came near capsizing the cake of ice in his frantic efforts to get on it.

Another slash and Tom succeeded in putting out the left eye of the brute, which only exasperated him the more.

"Bo'son! bo'son!" yelled the professor, to the boat a quarter of a mile away. "Hurry up!"

"I've put out one eye!" cried Tom. "Now if I can put out the other he'll go away."

"Oh, if I had my gun!" groaned the professor, "I could blow his head off."

"Your gun got us in this fix," said Barker.

"How so?" demanded the astonished professor.

"The gun busted," was the reply, "and loosened the top of the ice peak which slid down into the water with us."

"Is that how we came down here?" the amazed taxidermist asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I thought the bear did it."

"No—we came down on the bear, knocked him into the water, and piled in on top of him. These white bears don't mind water any more than fish do—look out there!"

The bear made another frantic attempt to reach Tom.

"For God's sake be careful, Tom!" said the professor again. "I can't get up, or I would try to help you."

"Be easy, professor. The bo'son is coming. I'll get his weather eye if he comes up on this side again."

"By the Lord, he's going round on the other side!" groaned Billy Barker, as the monster, his head now well covered with blood, beat around the cake of ice, which had drifted at least a hundred fathoms from where it first struck the water.

Tom crept round on hands and knees, watching for a chance to give the bear a stab. He knew that if the monster once got on the ice with them, he would make short work with them.

A polar bear is remarkably tenacious of purpose. The more he is baffled the more determined he becomes, and, in this case, the wounds

he had received made him more savage than ever, if such a thing is possible.

On the lower side the bear found a place where he could almost swing himself up on the ice. The cake tilted, and Tom was thrown against him.

"Oh, God!" he gasped, wildly striking at the good eye of the monster.

The knife struck the eye, and was buried to the hilt in the brain.

With a frightful roar, the beast struck Tom with one of his huge paws, knocking him at least twenty feet away into the water.

The knife was left sticking in the wound.

"Oh, Lord, save us!" groaned Barker, as he saw Tom swimming around the cake of ice, vainly trying to climb upon it.

If the bear with his steel-like claws could not climb on it, how could he?"

"Bo'son! bo'son!" called the professor, in stentorian tones.

"We're coming!" cried the bo'son, scarcely a hundred fathoms away.

The bear was roaring and fighting the water like a wounded whale. He no longer tried to get on the ice. He was blinded and wounded to death.

Tom swam out to meet the bo'son's boat. Dunbar had urged the bo'son to return to the ship for guns, but the gallant tar saw the mishap by which the party had been precipitated into the water, and at once pulled for the spot, trusting to luck to rescue them from the clutches of the bear.

In a few minutes he reached the boat.

"Pull him in, lads!" cried the bo'son. "Pull him. He's as game as the biggest bear at the North Pole! Here you are, lad. Are you hurt?"

"Not a bit," replied Tom. "I'm nearly frozen, though."

"Take a pull at that, my lad," said the bo'son, handing him a flask of red pepper tea, which Arctic explorers have found so necessary to have with them in that region.

Tom took a swallow of it, and the tears came into his eyes.

"Whew! It's hot as blazes!" he said.

"So it is," returned the bo'son. "It'll thaw you right out, too. What's the matter with that bear?"

"I guess he's blind. I stuck my knife into both his eyes."

"And didn't get hurt?"

"I got a thundering good thump from him when he knocked me off the ice," was the reply, "but I guess it doesn't hurt much."

They pulled for the cake of ice, and came alongside of it on the opposite side from where the bear was.

The brute was still roaring and fighting the water, though it was plain that he was growing weaker every minute.

"Come, jump in, professor!" called the bo'son as the boat came alongside the cake of ice.

"I can't," was the reply.

"What's the matter? Are you hurt?"

"Bruised some," was the reply, "but we are frozen to the ice."

"Great Neptune!" and the bo'son sprang on the ice, and went to his assistance. He found him hard and fast to the ice. Barker was in the same fix.

"We'll have to cut your clothes off," said the bo'son.

"Oh, no. We'd freeze to death."

"What'll we do then?"

"Cut the ice away under them," said Dunbar, tossing them a hatchet out of the boat.

The bo'son and two men then went to work and cut the professor and Barker loose from the floe. They sprang to their feet.

"I am freezing!" cried the professor.

"Here, take this," and in another moment the hot red pepper decoction sent tears to his eyes.

CHAPTER V. THE RESCUE.

In the meantime the wounded bear had drifted half a hundred fathoms away from the ice cake on which the professor had found safety. His struggles had been terrific. But he grew weaker, and at last it seemed as if he was dead.

"Blow me if I don't believe he's dead," said the old bo'son, looking half suspiciously at the beast as he floated with his head under the water. "Pull away, lads, and we'll see what's the matter with him."

They did pull away, and in a few minutes were within some four fathoms of the monster.

"Dead as a herring!" exclaimed the bo'son, looking at Tom. "Who killed him?"

"Don't know," said Tom. "The professor knocked the top of the ice peak down on him, with all three of us on top of it."

"There's a knife sticking in his eye," said Billy Barker, as the boat neared the dead monster.

"Well, give me that," said Tom; "I don't want to lose that."

"It's your knife, is it?" the bo'son asked.

"Yes."

"You stuck it there?"

"Yes. I believe I did."

"Then you killed it, for it went deep into his brain. You've done a big thing, lad," and the bluff old sailor grasped Tom's hand in his.

"I had to do it," said Tom. "I was in close quarters. He knocked me clear off the deck."

"For sticking him in the eye?"

"Yes."

"Don't blame him. Hurrah for Polar Bear Tom!"

The sailors cheered lustily, and Tom flushed with modest pride.

The professor grasped his hand and said to him:

"But for you, Tom, we would have fallen victims to that fellow. They are said to be the fiercest and most dangerous of all the bears of the world."

"He was an ugly looking fellow, sir," replied Tom. "I had to do something, as I didn't want to furnish him a dinner."

"Make fast to him and then pull for the ship," ordered the bo'son.

They fastened a line to a limb of the bear and then made ready to pull for the ship. One of the men pulled the knife out of the bear's eye and handed it to Tom. He took it and washed the blood off of it and put it into its sheath.

"Take care of that knife, lad," said the bo'son. "I'll wager I could sell it for fifty dollars when we go home again."

Tom laughed.

"I'm all broke up, I believe," said the professor. "I didn't know I was so badly hurt."

"We will soon reach the ship, sir," said the bo'son. "You had a great fall from the top of that iceberg, and then the splash in the water was enough to break you up. You're all right as long as no bones are broken."

They reached the ship in a half hour, and surprised all on board by the story of the killing of the bear by Tom with nothing but a sailor's knife.

"It was a wonderful escape," exclaimed Captain de Long. "You are to be congratulated, professor, on having such an assistant."

He also took Tom's hand, and said:

"Pluck will pull a man through a tight place every time."

They drew the bear up on deck by means of a pulley, and found that he weighed a ton.

"I think the lad ought to have the skin," suggested the bo'son.

"And the men the meat," added another.

"Yes—we'll have some fresh bear steaks by way of a change," said the first mate, and forthwith they commenced taking the skin off for the purpose of cutting up the monster.

"I consider your adventure an exceedingly perilous one, professor," said Captain de Long to the taxidermist. "I was watching your party through a glass when you all slid down in a body on the bear. I thought your gun made an unusually loud report."

"So it did," replied the professor. "Seeing the bear slowly but surely ascending the iceberg to where we were, I put in a double charge in each barrel, as I thought. In my great excitement I must have put both charges in one barrel, as the gun burst all to pieces. It's a wonder it did not kill some of us."

"The concussion loosened a part of the top of the peak," remarked the captain. "That's the cause of your mishap," and the officer could not repress a smile as he thought of the tremendous descent on the bear that swept him off into the sea.

The surgeon found the professor pretty well shaken up, so much so that he was forced to keep his berth for several days. The shock of the explosion and tumble had been too much for him.

But Tom was as bright as ever.

The blow that knocked him into the sea was more of a vigorous shove than a blow, and did not hurt him much.

"I don't want to go on the ice any more without a revolver," he said to the bo'son. "If I'd had one when that bear called on me I could have put a bullet through his brain without any trouble."

"A revolver isn't what you want to fight polar bears with," remarked Captain Dunbar, dryly.

"Why not?" Tom asked.

"Because they're as hard to kill as an elephant is. Revolvers aint heavy enough."

"I don't know about that," said Tom. "If a polar bear corners you on the ice, you can put a bullet in his brain by shooting him in the eye and—"

"But if you don't hit the eye?"

"Then he'll hit you," was the frank admission, at which they laughed.

"But you must not miss the eye. When the bear is within three feet of you it's no time to miss your aim. A revolver would drop him dead at that distance, for no living animal can stand a bullet in his brain."

"I believe you are right, lad," said the bo'son.

"I'm going to carry my revolver the next time,"

"So am I," said Dunbar, "but my rule is, if you haven't got something better, to run if you have any place to run to. These white bears are bad customers."

Tom and the bo'son took the immense bear skin and salted it heavily for the purpose of curing it, putting it where it would not freeze till the salt had done the work.

The discovery of an open sea beyond the field of ice made the captain of the *Jeannette* exceedingly anxious to get into it. But it seemed to be impossible to reach it unless there would be a break in the field of ice. That did not seem likely to occur, so solid and unpromising did it look.

He proceeded to coast along the lower edge of the ice field, however, keeping a strict watch for a passage from the "crow nest" in the rigging.

After going nearly fifty miles, a passage was discovered. It was about a half a mile wide, and seemed to have been made by a current settling against the lower end of the ice field, which was thus broken. The great field of ice on the south side seemed to be slowly moving eastward, widening the gap every hour.

The passage was some ten miles in length. The *Jeannette* was soon through that, and once more she floated in an open sea.

"I wonder if they expect to find the Pole in an open sea?" Tom asked of the bo'son.

Jack shook his head.

"Don't talk about it," lad," he said. "There ain't any Pole, and they'll never find one, either. But some of us 'll freeze to death, get chewed up by a bear, or get nipped in the ice, and the others 'll go back home heroes."

Tom looked the bo'son full in the face, and asked:

"What did you come for then?"

"For the money. You didn't think I was looking for the Pole, did you?"

Tom smiled.

"You are going to be one of the heroes who get back home?" Tom asked.

"Yes, if I don't get too much bilge water in my hold."

Tom grasped the bo'son's hand, and said:

"So do I. All the bears of the Arctic Ocean can't keep me from going home again."

"That's right, lad. Never give up."

"I never do. Several times I thought that bear had the best of me, but I kept pegging away at him till I got his binnacle lights out."

The professor came on deck at this juncture to look around. He saw Tom and the bo'son whispering together, and asked:

"How do you like the Arctic regions, Tom?"

"Quite a change from my other voyages, sir," replied Tom. "I'll have something new to talk about when I go back to New York."

"So you will. Have you any people living in New York?"

"No kinsfolk, but Benny Havens and his sister are my friends."

"His sister particularly, eh?" remarked the professor, as he turned to greet the ship's surgeon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TREACHEROUS RIVAL—A TERRIBLE DEED.

By the side of a coil of rope not far from where Tom and the bo'son were standing, stood a tall young sailor who had shipped under the name of Ned Truxton. The moment he heard Tom utter the names of Benny Havens and his sister he wheeled and gave him a searching look. The expression on his face was one not easily interpreted. But when he saw the confused look on Tom's face when the professor said:

"His sister particularly, eh?" he was changed to a scowling demon in facial expression.

But neither Tom nor the bo'son noticed him at the time.

An hour later he approached Tom and asked:

"Did you say that Benny Havens in New York was your friend?"

"Yes, I did," was the quick reply. "Do you know him?"

"I know a Benny Havens who was to be admitted to the bar a month after I left New York."

"The same one!" exclaimed Tom, grasping Truxton's hand. "He is a cripple, is he not?"

"Yes."

"And did you know his sister?"

"Yes—very well."

"When did you see them last?"

"Not six months ago."

"I haven't seen them in four years. Benny is almost a man now, isn't he?"

"Yes, and will make a great lawyer. He talks like a judge now."

"I'm glad to hear that!" and Tom wrung Truxton's hand cordially. "Why in thunder didn't you tell me before that you came from New York?"

"I didn't know that you came from there," replied Ned. "How long have you known Benny Havens and his sister?"

"Ever since we were little children together. We used to sell papers on the streets, and both of us clubbed together and paid Nellie's board so she could go to school. When Benny was run over on Broadway and crippled, he couldn't sell papers any more, so I took care of both of them. I send him part of my wages every time I reach a port. How did Nellie look when you saw her last?"

"She is the prettiest girl in New York," replied Ned.

"I knew she would be," said Tom, proudly. "She was a sweet girl when I left New York. She writes such pretty letters, too. I received a letter from her just before we left San Francisco, in which she told me all the news about my old chums among the boys. She is a good girl, I know."

"Yes, and has a dozen beaux, too, I think."

"Oh, she ain't going to marry any of them," said Tom, laughing; "she wrote me about a fellow named Ned Watson, a young sailor, who wanted her to marry him, but she told him she could not do so, as she did not love him. Did you see such a fellow around when you were there?"

Truxton's face was ashen-hued for a moment or two. Tom was gazing at an iceberg in the distance at the time and did not notice it.

"Yes," he replied to the question. "I saw him several times."

"Good-looking fellow, was he? She wrote that he was."

"Yes, I believe he was."

Just then the professor called Tom to his assistance below, and the two young sailors parted.

Tom went below with the professor, and Truxton continued to gaze seaward.

"Ten thousand whales!" hissed Ned through his clenched teeth, "so it's for him she refused me, is it? She wrote to him about me, too, eh? Glad I changed my name when I shipped on this voyage, for she'll never know that it was I who left him dead in the Arctic Sea. You'll never see him again, Nellie Havens, for I swear by the eternal icebergs that he shall never return alive. With him dead, you'll soon be the wife of Ned Watson, Nellie Havens."

The reader will readily understand the situation. Ned Watson, a handsome, but reckless young sailor, had met Benny Havens and his sister in New York, and fell desperately in love with the fair young girl. She rejected him when he proposed, and he committed an assault on a young man, thinking that it was on his account that he had been rejected, and fled to San Francisco to avoid arrest and imprisonment.

Knowing that the names of the *Jeannette's* crew would be published to the world, he gave the name of Ned Truxton when he shipped for the voyage.

The discovery of Tom was the greatest surprise to him, and hope again sprang up in his heart that if he was removed she would not reject him a second time. He would go back a hero, of whom she would be proud, a full purse, and thus gain his suit.

He resolved to watch his opportunity to quietly dispose of Tom, when no one could suspect him of being guilty of any wrong.

In the meantime he resolved to become the intimate friend of Tom, though, for some reason for which he could not account, he did not like the bo'son.

When Tom approached him the next day, when neither had anything to do, Ned grasped his hand and said:

"You don't know how glad I am that we have the same friends in New York. I feel as though I had known you all my life—as if we were brothers."

"Just so with me," said Tom, returning the hand-shake. "I was telling the bo'son last night how it was that we had the same friends in New York. Will you go back to New York when the *Jeannette* returns?"

"Yes, and call on the Havens the first day I land."

"So will I," said Tom. "Oh, we'll have a jolly good time, when we get back!" and the young sailor's eyes flashed with pleasurable anticipations.

That night the bo'son whispered to Tom:

"Keep your weather eye open, lad, and don't let any secrets fall on the deck of Truxton."

"Eh, bo'son?"

"Keep your secrets to yourself, Truxton ain't the man to leave them with. Don't like his jib."

Tom laughed easily. He knew the bo'son did not like Truxton, but said nothing to either about it.

A week after the two young men had thus become intimate the *Jeannette* was again stopped by the ice. Great icebergs had been floating around them for several days. The result was she was compelled to change her course, which she did, and made a two days' run. Then she came in sight of land, from which they saw smoke ascending.

"Ah! It's a settlement of natives," said Captain de Long.

Of course preparations were at once made to go ashore.

The bo'son took charge of the boat. Tom, Ned and the professor went along also.

They reached the land, which was covered with snow, and were received by several natives who looked very much like Esquimauxs, low of stature, thick-set and clad in bear and seal skins, with immense snow-shoes, by means of which they walked over the snow with but little trouble.

Captain de Long tried in vain to ascertain the language they spoke. He could not make them understand him, try as hard as he would. They gazed on him and the *Jeannette* with unmingled awe and surprise.

"They are the most stupid set I ever saw," said the captain. "But we've got to stay here till we can find a passage through that ice field. There must be some way of communicating with these people, and we must find it out. They seem to be harmless, inoffensive people."

"Yes," said the professor. "May be they are suspicious of us and are afraid to trust us."

The captain finally succeeded in making friends of them by judicious presents, and then they replied by signs that they were glad to see them.

De Long made them understand that he wanted to get farther north of that place. They nodded their heads and pointed over the snow-clad hills, as much as to say:

"You can go that way if you like."

"I'll stop here till we see and make ourselves familiar with the place," said De Long to the professor, "and send out a party to the north of here to find out how far this ice obstruction extends."

"I'd like to go with the party," said the professor, "and see what kind of game can be found here."

"Of course. We'll return to the ship and get supplies. I guess we can get guides and dogs here to run the sledges."

In another hour these sledges were ready, and several other hours after the party was ready to start.

They made very slow progress, owing to the snow. They never got a glimpse of the ground, and as the icebergs had been driven against the shore and frozen there, it was difficult to tell where the land and water separated.

When they had gone about one hundred miles they found themselves many miles out at sea on the ice. The captain was anxious to get a glimpse of an open sea beyond, if one existed. He concluded, therefore, to push on and find out. The guide could give no information on the subject, but seemed willing to go.

"He was born in an iceberg," growled the bo'son, "and don't mind cold any more than I do a glass of grog."

Suddenly the guide became greatly excited, and spoke in outlandish gutturals. They could not understand what ailed him till they saw two immense white bears approaching them. He immediately cut the dogs loose and took to his heels.

"Steady now," called out the captain, "give them the rifles!"

Four rifles were quickly emptied at the monsters.

They were wounded, and, strange to say, ran off, going in opposite directions.

Tom and Ned darted off in pursuit of one, whilst the party followed the other.

Tom was sure that he could kill the bear if he could get up close enough to put a bullet in his head.

"Come on, Ned!" he cried. "He's badly hurt, and another shot'll fetch him!"

They pushed on, the bear disappearing behind a huge boulder of ice. Round the iceberg they ran, and found the monster making for a very large mountain of ice, which towered over two hundred feet in the air.

Just as they reached the foot of the iceberg they saw the bear disappear through a crevice in the ice.

"That's his den!" cried Tom.

"Better keep out of it," replied Ned. "There may be more than one in there."

They went cautiously up to the cavern, however, and found that a big crevice in the icebergs had made a den for the bear.

"What shall we do, Ned?" Tom asked, looking first at his companion and then at the hole through which the bear had gone.

"Better keep away," was the reply.

"I hear him growling. He's wounded badly," and Tom drew his gun in position to shoot and advanced into the mouth of the cavern.

Quick as a flash Ned sprang forward and gave him a violent push. With a wild cry Tom fell forward and disappeared down the icy cavern.

CHAPTER VII.

A WOULD-BE MURDERER.

For a moment after committing the terrible crime, Ned Truxton stood transfixed. He could not move even were it necessary to save his life.

The next moment he heard a terrific roar, a shot, and then a fierce growl and cry.

"My God!" he gasped, "it's all over! She'll be mine now when we return to New York! I have become a murderer for her sake!" and then he took to his heels and ran—ran as fast as fear could send him. It seemed that an avenging Nemesis pursued him. The whistling of the arctic wind as he ran sounded like the shrieks of vengeance in his ears.

Suddenly the thought flashed through his mind that he would have to account to his comrades for the disappearance of Tom.

That checked him, and he abruptly halted, turned and gazed back at the craggy iceberg at the base of which he had so foully murdered the gallant young sailor.

"What shall I say?" he asked himself aloud. "I must tell them something they can believe, or suspicion will turn on me."

Looking around he espied a large basin, or hole in the ice. Fifty feet down was the dark waters of the sea.

"Ah! They both fell in here!" he exclaimed. "And no one will ever be the wiser. I'll say he met the bear bravely, and that in the struggle they both went over together in the hole and disappeared under the water. I can lead them to the spot. Ah! here are the bear tracks all round here in the snow. I'll tramp around and leave footprints of a struggle."

He suited his actions to his words, and squirmed about on the snow till he had made innumerable impressions.

Then he started to return to the sleds. He had not gone a hundred yards before he found that he was not going in the right direction.

He stopped and looked around him. For the life of him he could not tell in which direction he had come in the rapid chase of the bear.

"My God!" he gasped, "if I am lost my fate will be worse than his. I will die of hunger and cold," and then he again gazed around at the great number of icy crags, and tried to remember whether or not he had passed any of them in the chase.

"Lost! lost!" he moaned, "and Tom is avenged! God will not hear a prayer from a murderer. Oh, this is terrible!"

He wrung his hands, and a gleam of desperation came into his face.

Suddenly, as if a faint glimmer of hope was held out to him, he dashed away toward the nearest crag and sought to climb it. In some places the great ice crags, a hundred feet above his head, threatened to fall upon and crush him.

Hoping to find a means of ascent on the other side, he started to go round the iceberg.

Loosened by some mysterious process of nature, a huge, ragged piece of ice, weighing a ton or more, fell just in front of him with a tremendous crash. Hundreds of icicles flew in every direction, and one piece struck him on the forehead with such force as to knock him senseless.

How long he lay there he never knew. When he came to, he was so cold he could scarcely bend a limb to walk. It took him longer to get on his feet than it did old Rip Van Winkle when he arose from his twenty years' nap.

His face and bosom were covered with blood.

"Oh, Lord, if I ever get back to the sledges, I'll never leave 'em again," he moaned. "I can't live another hour in this cold."

But he commenced a violent contortion, and thus got up a circulation again. But he dared not go near that crag again. Had that piece of ice fallen on him, it would have ground him to powder.

But he made his way to another, which seemed as though it could be climbed with some degree of success.

He succeeded in reaching the top of the crag, and gazed eagerly around in search of the rest of the party.

Not a living soul could he see.

Ice and snow was everywhere.

It was a panorama of frigid desolation, the sight of which filled him with an indefinable horror.

"I am doomed," he moaned, sinking helplessly down on the ice. "I may as well die here as anywhere else. Oh, God, I never thought I was bringing this on myself when I pushed Tom into the cavern!"

Suddenly he sprang wildly to his feet and listened.

A gun-shot sounded in the frosty air—and another.

He drew the revolver he had in his pocket and fired it off. An answering shot was heard, and in a few minutes he heard the shouts of the exploring party.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, tears streaming down his face. "I am not doomed yet! There they are," and then he shouted out at the top of his lungs and proceeded to descend the crag to meet them.

"Where's Tom?" the professor asked, on coming up to him.

"Poor Tom!" he replied.

"What in God's name is the matter with Tom?" cried the bo'son.

"He's dead."

"Dead! How?"

"The bear clinched him and both rolled into an ice hole together."

"My God!" groaned the professor.

"Didn't either come up again?" the bo'son asked.

"No—I waited to see, but they did not show up any more."

"Where is the place? I want to see it. My God! Such a brave fellow as he was, too."

Ned led the way back, and by good fortune found the hole he had selected in which to conceal his diabolical crime.

They all looked over and down at the dark water, but could see nothing.

"I don't see how they could have gone under the ice," said the bo'son, "since the ice must be several hundred feet under the water."

"They may have sunk to the bottom," said the professor, "or there may be a crevice somewhere in which they were carried by the current."

"Poor Tom," moaned the bo'son. "He was as brave a fellow as ever trod the deck of a ship."

"So I think," added the professor. "I liked him very much. He didn't appear to be afraid of anything in the world. He certainly did not appreciate the danger of attacking a polar bear."

The party turned slowly and sadly away to return to the sledges, where the guide had again collected the dogs and hitched them up ready to move.

Captain De Long was greatly moved by the tragic death of Tom, and said:

"This is our first loss. I hope it will be our last. Remember that we are not here in quest of adventures, or to hunt bears. Hereafter we must let bears alone, unless the bears interfere with us. They are very dangerous. It will pay to leave them to themselves."

The party then resumed their journey over the ice, and in a few hours were many miles away from the scene of Tom's untimely end.

A few hours later snow fell again so fast and furious that the party were almost buried in it. They were forced to take shelter under an overhanging ice-crag and wait for it to stop.

Oh, how cold it was!

But for the seal-skin clothes they wore they would have perished then and there. But with such warm clothing and plenty to eat they managed to keep alive.

Would you believe it, reader? The guide actually built a fire on the ice! It was made of oil, or fat, of seals, bears and fish in a rude earthen dish. It gave a bright flame and moderate heat. The very sight of a fire, though, in that icy region was enough to make one feel warm.

The snow-fall lasted several hours, and the reader may understand that it did not melt as fast as it fell. On the contrary, it seemed to be as dry as powder—as though it came to stay forever.

Traveling in such snow, two feet deep, was an impossibility.

Captain De Long grew uneasy and consulted his compass and quadrant quite frequently.

But the native Esquimaux and his dogs seemed to be as unconcerned as one would be in the woods within a mile of home in New York State. By and by it was seen that the snow was hardening, and in ten hours after it fell it was a hard crust, strong enough to bear the weight of a horse.

"Thank God for that!" fervently ejaculated

Captain De Long; "we can make good time now."

In another hour they were on their journey again.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOWN IN AN ICE CAVERN.

THE reader will remember the cowardly, treacherous attack of Ned Truxton on Tom as he was peering down into the icy den of the wounded polar bear.

When Tom received the violent shove that sent him tumbling into the horrible crevice, he stretched out his hands and tried to brace himself. But in a moment he saw that he was doomed.

A cry of horror escaped him as he went tumbling down some twenty feet or more.

He fell squarely on the back of the bear. The beast uttered a fierce growl, and bounded away to the farther side of the cavern, where, he wheeled round and glared at the young sailor with blood-shot eyes.

Tom sprang to his feet, surprised to find himself still alive, and picked up his rifle, which had fallen from his grasp.

With a roar the bear came at him.

Knowing there was no such thing as retreat, Tom raised the rifle and pulled the trigger. The muzzle was within a foot of the brute's head when the explosion took place. The whole top of the bear's head was blown off, and the monster rolled over on the icy floor of the cavern in the agonies of death.

Tom uttered a cry of triumph, which, as it reached the ears of Ned Truxton, sounded like a cry of agony. It may be that Ned *expected* to hear such a cry, and thought he had heard it.

Tom was so overcome at his deliverance from a horrible death that he leaned against the side of the cavern, and felt as weak as a sick kitten.

Cold drops of perspiration stood on his brow, and he breathed hard for a while.

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, after a pause of several minutes, "that was a narrow escape. What in the world was the matter? What made Ned push me down here, I wonder? Something must have run against him. Perhaps another bear rushed on him. I'll call him. Oh, Ned! Ned Truxton! I say, Ned!"

Of course Ned did not answer.

He was running away then, as fast as his heels could carry him, pursued by fear and a guilty conscience.

"Poor Ned! He must have been caught and killed. These polar bears are terrible beasts—more dangerous than lions or tigers. How lucky I am that the gun was loaded! I would have been torn to pieces in an instant. The one that attacked Ned may be the mate of this one. I'll load up again and be ready for him if he should come down."

The next few minutes were spent in putting himself in a state of defence. Then he turned his attention to the cavern. It was soon evident to him, that the bears had used it several times before.

"But how am I to get out of it?" he asked himself, looking around. "The claws of a polar bear are like steel hooks, he can climb anywhere with them, but I can't," and then he scrutinized closely the walls on every side.

"Ah, I cannot climb a wall of ice," he said, after a thorough inspection of the sides of the cavern. "Here are places where the bears ascended and descended. But they had sharp claws, which I have not."

He sat down on the huge carcass of the dead bear, and gave himself up to despair.

"It isn't cold down here," he finally said, "at least not so cold as it is outside. I don't feel cold any way. I do feel hungry, though, and if I could I would cook a piece of bear-meat. Great Heavens! am I to stay here and starve to death, or live until I eat up the carcass like a cat? I *must* get out of this place. I *won't* stay here and starve like a rat in a wire-trap. Ah! thank God for the thought! I've got my knife with me! Ice is not like flint, I can cut it away. I can cut steps in this wall, and thus climb out. Oh, yes, I can get out!" and he fairly danced with joy at the thought.

To work, then, he went, pecking holes in the wall of ice for his hands and feet. He was obliged to cut inward and then downward, in order to get a hand hold, otherwise he would slip and fall to the bottom again.

Hour after hour he worked till he was forced to cease and rest.

Lying on the carcass of the bear he fell asleep. How long he slept he knew not. He awoke feeling quite stiff from the cold.

"What a fool I was to fall asleep," he said.

"Another bear might have come in and taken me at a disadvantage. I've had a good sleep, though, which means that I slept a long time. I wonder if they are looking for me outside. Poor Ned! He has been killed. That I am sure, or he would have brought them here to try to find out whether I am alive or dead."

He then went to work again pecking step holes in the ice. Hour after hour he worked, till he was two-thirds of the way up. Then he had to stop and rest.

But he did not rest long, for he was growing hungry. He had never yet been reduced to the necessity of eating raw meat. He felt almost hungry enough to do it now, but he concluded to wait and see if he could not find the party outside and get something better adapted to a civilized stomach.

At last he succeeded in reaching the open air again, and, oh, how cold it was compared to the air in the cavern! He was in a profuse perspiration from the great strain on him in holding on with one hand whilst cutting with the other.

"Ah! I'm out now!" he cried, wrapping himself up as best he could. "I wonder where Ned is. That bear, or whatever it was, must have carried him off. I see no blood here. But it has been snowing; how could I see it? Surely they must be looking for us; they would not go and leave us."

He got upon the snow and found that it had crusted hard enough to hold his weight.

"I think I know where I left them," he said. "But surely they would not stay there all this time. They were over that way, on the other side of that mound of ice. That's the one the bear ran round behind to get away from us. I'll go over there and climb to the top. Maybe I'll see them from there."

He soon reached the ice-mound, and ascended to the top of it.

"My God!" he exclaimed, on reaching the top. "I am lost up here in this ice-bound region! I have no chart or compass, and I can't tell north from south, east from west, as the sun just goes round and round on the edge of the horizon, as though he had no place to rise or set. What shall I do? Where shall I go? No living soul in sight, and I can see for miles around. I see ducks in plenty, but how am I to cook them? Great God! This is terrible! I'm glad I have my gun, though, and some two or three dozen loads of ammunition. I think I know where the land is, and had better go in that direction. I may float out to sea on this ice-pack and never be heard of again. I don't know that I ever will be heard of again, but I want to have the chance, anyhow."

He came down from the mound of snow-covered ice, and struck a trot over the crusted snow that soon started the circulation of blood through his half frozen veins. Mile after mile he ran, keeping a good lookout for any signs of his comrades.

"Lost! Lost!" he repeated to himself a hundred times as he ran, and seemed bent on impressing that fact on his mind. "How will I ever get home again? Will I ever get back?"

On he ran, till at last he judged that he was on the land again. He could tell by the smoothness of the snow-covered surface. On the water the action of the waves sometimes piled up the ice two or three hundred feet high. By the contrast he knew the land, and his courage increased.

"I may meet with some Esquimaux," he muttered, "and thus be saved from starving. I may be able to make my way back to the *Jeannette*. Would to God I could! I'll have to eat raw meat, though. But what of that? A man will eat his own grandmother rather than starve to death. Oh, Lord! there comes a big bear straight for me!"

Tom quickly examined his rifle, and saw that it was all ready, and then quietly waited for the beast to commence hostilities.

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX.

THE bear seemed to be hungry, as he quickened his pace the moment he saw our hero. In the distance, a mile or more, Tom saw a party of four Esquimaux following the bear. They were evidently tracking him with the intention of killing him with their harpoons.

"Thank God for the presence of human beings!" exclaimed Tom, "though they maybe as hostile as the Polar bears. I'll wait for that bear to get within two fathoms of me, and then I'll aim at his eye. If the gun misses fire, it will be the last of me."

The bear came steadily forward, and when within ten paces or so of the young sailor, seemed to be astonished at his not either running or show-

ing fight. He rose on his hind feet, uttered a fierce growl, and started forward again. He was a monster, standing at least six feet high.

Tom took deliberate aim and pulled the trigger. The ounce ball penetrated the right eye and crashed through his brain, going out at the back of his head.

With a frightful roar the monster went over backwards on the snow, fighting savagely at space with his huge paws and ugly claws.

"Ah! That was well done!" cried Tom, quickly reloading his gun. "If one can get a bullet in the brain of any animal he is master of the situation. They can't live after that. He is even a bigger one than the others, I believe."

In a couple of minutes he had his gun reloaded and was ready for any emergency. Such tremendous creatures as the polar bear are very tenacious of life. He didn't know but what he might spring up and charge on him in his death agonies.

But the bear did not get on his feet again. He growled, scratched the snow at a terrible rate, but continued to grow weaker every moment.

In the meantime the four Esquimaux came up, their swarthy faces expressing the greatest wonder at the marvelous killing of the bear. They looked at the bear and then at the young sailor, who was nearly two feet taller than themselves, and uttered several guttural expressions, which, of course, were all Greek to Tom.

"I suppose you fellows don't know how to talk United States?" said Tom, looking hard at one of them.

Of course they didn't. One of them went up to the dead bear, and, pointing to the wound in his head, uttered some more of his unintelligible jargon.

"Yes," said Tom, "I did it with my little gun. I'm just bully on bears."

He could not refrain from a smile as he spoke. The Esquimaux smiled too, though their smiles did not enhance their beauty much. They were ugly, greasy-looking fellows.

Their evident desire, however, to partake of the feast was very plain to Tom. He made a motion as of cutting and eating meat which was readily understood by them, for they fell aboard the carcass like a pack of hungry wolves.

Each man had a peculiar kind of a knife made of ivory from the tusks of the narwhal. They were very rude, primitive weapons, but they managed to get the skin off that bear about as quick as a couple of New York butchers could have done. Then they went for the meat with the eagerness of cannibals, eating it raw.

Tom was hungry, too, but the sight of such gluttony, and the raw, bloody meat sickened him. He could not have eaten it even to save life.

But though the bear was a monster in size, Tom really feared there would be none left for him, so ravenously did they eat. They ate immense quantities until they were unable to eat any more. Then they began to cut off huge chunks to take away with them.

"They must have fire sometimes," he said to himself, "and somewhere to live. I'll take some of the meat for myself and wait till I can get some fire."

Drawing his knife he cut off about five or six pounds of steak, and held on to it. The Esquimaux looked at his sailor's knife with the greatest curiosity, and wanted to handle it. But he would not let them touch it.

They made many signs to him which he could not understand, and he in turn made signs that were perfectly incomprehensible to them.

But he did succeed in making them understand that they were welcome to the carcass of the bear, and that they had better take it home with them.

They then loaded themselves down with the meat, and he took charge of the heavy skin. Thus loaded, they started back the way the Esquimaux had come.

Ere they had gone a mile, Tom saw another one coming in a sledge drawn by four Esquimaux dogs. The dogs came at full speed, the light sledge skimming over the surface of the crusted snow as lightly as a feather.

At a word the dogs stopped and the driver got out. The others threw their meat into the sledge; Tom threw in the bear skin, and then went along with them.

Several miles down the coast they went to where he found a collection of small huts built of sand and stone.

He soon caught the name of the place. It was called Utlik, and the head man of the village was named Magolik.

Magolik lived in the largest hut in Utlik, and had a wife, two sons and a daughter.

The hut was a low-roofed structure of dirt and gravel, which was reached by crawling through

a hole on hands and knees. Once inside the air was almost stifling, for the Esquimaux is not cleanly in his habits or person. Bits of walrus meat and hide were decaying in a corner, and they never bathed—never washed their faces or hands.

On an earthen dish Tom saw a fire made of blubber and moss.

"By the great whales!" he exclaimed, "I'll cook a piece of bear meat and eat it before they ask me to eat the stuff they are cooking."

Cutting off a piece of the bear steak he had brought with him, he held it on the point of his knife and cooked it over the smoking flame till it was pretty well done. It was smoked as black as soot could make it, but little he cared for that.

As soon as he thought it done enough he commenced devouring it. He was too hungry to stand on ceremony about it, and in a few minutes his hands and mouth indicated a slight knowledge of the burnt cork business.

A young girl, thinking she would please him, offered him some of the stuff she was cooking—a sort of soup, the odor of which caused him to draw back with disgust.

"No, thank you," he said. "I'm doing well enough with my smoked meat."

The young girl seemed to be offended. Tom saw her parents scowl, and heard them grunt out their discontent.

Whereupon he made signs to them that he was now full and couldn't eat any more. That seemed to mollify them, and then they began to inspect him from head to foot. His woolen clothes seemed to excite their wonder more than anything else. They could not imagine what kind of an animal it came off of. As their dress was exclusively of skins, they naturally inferred that his was also.

Then they examined his cap and coat. They thought the sealskin cap the most ingenious thing they had ever seen.

The daughter of the house put it on her own head and strutted about to be admired by the rest of the family.

Tom pulled from his pocket a small pocket hand-mirror, and held it up before her. She looked at it, saw the reflection of her coppery face, and uttered a shout of joy.

The entire family sprang forward and crowded round her to see what it was. Of course each had to inspect it, and admire his or her special ugliness in it. They had probably seen their reflections in smooth water, but never before in a mirror.

The daughter then took it again and gazed at herself, smiling and talking to her likeness with childish glee.

"I'll give her that," said Tom, and then he made signs to that effect. The delight of the young girl was unbounded.

She was a true daughter of Eve, as was demonstrated by her curiosity to see more. She took his revolver from his belt and playfully examined it. Another got his gun.

"Let that be," he said, reaching out his hand to take his gun from the boy. The next moment the revolver went off in the hands of the girl, and the hullabaloo that followed would have waked up the dead.

CHAPTER X.

THE CURIOSITY OF THE ESQUIMAUX.

THE explosion of the revolver in that close hut was like that of a small cannon. It was simply deafening. The women screamed, the men yelled, and the dogs howled, each apparently trying to outdo the other in the matter of noise.

"The fools ain't all dead yet by one shot, at least," said Tom, as he secured his gun to prevent another shot.

The young girl who had accidentally fired the revolver let it fall to the ground, while she leaped around and screamed as loud as the loudest.

Tom picked up the revolver and stuck it in his belt again, and then exerted himself to quiet the yelling Esquimaux, and ascertain what damage was done.

"Hi!" he yelled at the top of his voice. "Keep quiet, will you?"

Of course they didn't understand a word he said, but his voice and calm demeanor had the effect of quieting them. They stared at him in open-eyed wonder.

He reached out his hand and caught hold of the young girl who had discharged the pistol, and drew her to him.

"Are you hurt, little girl?" he asked, looking at her fat, copper-colored hands and arms. She smiled, and replied in a guttural that was all Esquimaux to him.

The continuous whining of one of the dogs finally attracted the attention of one of the men.

He examined him and found his tail shot off within an inch of his body.

A savage exclamation called the attention of the others to the terrible calamity. They all grew terribly excited and looked savagely at Tom.

Tom picked up the severed caudal appendage, and handed it to the young girl with a smile on his face, saying:

"You are a pretty good shot, my dear. They must blame you for it, not me."

She took the severed tail and curiously examined it. She could not understand how the revolver had cut off the dog's tail. They all knew, though, that the weapon had done it, and the owner of the dog seemed to be determined to hold him responsible for it.

"Oh, I'll pay for the tail," said Tom, on being told by gestures that could not be misunderstood, that he must pay for the dog's loss. "How much is it?"

The owner did not understand him, of course, but on Tom's pulling a two-bladed knife from his pocket, of which he happened to have two at the time, the eyes of the avaricious native fairly danced with delight.

Opening it, Tom exhibited the blades, and then gave it to the owner of the dog.

The others crowded around him to look at the new toy, or treasure, just as they chose to regard it. The happy son of an iceberg was never so proud. He held on to the knife like grim death, and would not let it get out of his hands. He knew what incorrigible thieves his people were. Tom noticed the cautiousness of the man, and resolved to keep his eyes skinned lest he be robbed.

"By the great North Pole," he mentally ejaculated, "I've got to sleep some time, and then they'll go through me. If they meddle with my gun or revolver somebody will get killed or hurt. Wonder if they won't be afraid to meddle with fire-arms, now! I'd give the gun and revolver to be on board the *Jeannette* or with the exploring party."

The present of the knife had the effect of mollifying the whole party. They were exceedingly cordial to him after that. They gave him a seat on a bear-skin and talked at and about him at a terrific rate. The women were more voluble than the men, and seemed more interested in what he wore than anything else. They could not understand that his woolen clothes were not the skins of some strange animals, and he could not explain to them the mysteries of weaving.

Other natives came in, till the little hut was crowded almost to suffocation. The only window to the hut was an aperture about a foot square, over which was stretched a piece of the intestine of the seal. A grayish light struggled through the skin, which was supplemented by a light from a dish of blubber and moss, which burned brightly enough, but emitted an unwholesome odor and any amount of smoke.

Besides the light, another fire was burning under an earthenware pot of very rude native make, in which an unsavory mess was boiling.

Tom could stand it no longer.

He made a very decided motion toward the door.

Two men tried to oppose him, but he swept them out of the way with his right arm and dropped down on his knees to crawl through to the outside.

The Esquimaux were dismayed.

They thought he was trying to escape them. The men rushed out after him as fast as they could through the narrow passage and surrounded him.

Tom was so much relieved on once more breathing the fresh, frosty air that he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction. The natives kept up a constant jabbering, and began to gather their weapons, which were rude harpoons, the blades of which were made of the tusks of the walrus, ground down against rocks.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, on suddenly seeing the condition of affairs. "What's up now?"

He had heard Captain De Long say the Esquimaux would never strike a man except behind his back. He knew they could throw the rude harpoon they carried with great force, and therefore he stepped aside and would not allow one of them to get behind him.

Just at that moment a large sea fowl of the duck species came flying over the spot. Thinking to show them the terrible accuracy of his aim, as well as the destructive nature of the fire-arms he carried, he raised his gun, took a deliberate aim, and fired.

The bird gave a squawk and came tumbling to the ground.

A more astonished set of people was never seen. Several ran to the fowl, picked it up and examined it. It was in its dying agonies, and bled quite freely.

They pulled the feathers apart and examined the wounds, their faces, usually stolid and unexpressive, showing the very great surprise they felt.

One of the men took up his harpoon and aimed in the air with it as he had seen Tom do, and exclaimed:

"Boom!" in imitation of the noise made by the gun.

Tom laughed, and the fellow, doubtless thinking he had done something very funny, went through the motion again, and laughed heartily at it himself.

That time Tom shook his head as much as to say:

"That isn't the way to do it."

The men who had seen him kill the bear the day before now repeated the story, with even more vividness than he had any idea they could. He noticed their gestures, and saw that they fully appreciated the terrible power of the gun and revolver.

"But, blast it!" exclaimed Tom, after looking on awhile, "can't these people aid me in getting back to the *Jeannette*, where I can get something decent to eat? A week on such fare and in such quarters will end my career. Why, the dogs down in civilized countries live better than these people do. I say, you," and he called to the man who seemed to be a head man among them, "come here and see if I can make you understand me. I want to go down the coast, there, till I reach a ship. Do you understand? Of course not. What do these lubbers know about a ship? I'll get 'em to go down the coast with me by making 'em believe I can kill plenty of game down there for 'em."

He made motions of creeping forward and shooting at large game, and killing it, then pointed down the coast as the place where it could be found.

It so happened that nearly all their game came from that direction, and the suggestion pleased them immensely. They chattered among themselves for several minutes, and then they began to prepare their sledges and dogs for a trip.

"Thank God, I have made them understand me at last!" exclaimed Tom. "I can find the ship by keeping along the coast. She is stuck in an ice-pack, only a few miles from there. Once in sight of her masts, nothing in this ice-bound country can keep me from her."

CHAPTER XI.

SEARCHING FOR THE SHIP.

Tom took great delight in examining the sledges of the Esquimaux as they were brought out of hidden places. Some of them must have been hundreds of years old, as they were made of material calculated to last forever in that climate.

The body of the Esquimaux sledge is made of walrus hide, which is both thick and strong. It is cured, how, our hero could not ascertain, cut in square pieces, and sewed together with sinews of some kind of animals. They become as hard as sheet iron, and last forever.

For runners they use ivory—the tusks of the walrus, which are fastened ingeniously underneath in such a way as to preclude all possibility of coming off or getting lost.

Some of the sledges were cradle-shaped, and others seemed to have been fashioned after the old-fashion Indian birch canoe. They could hold a great deal, but generally the Esquimaux, while being a first-class glutton, never carry much provisions with them. They seldom go very far from their humble homes. Their dogs travel very fast over the crusted snow and ice. It is only on the ice on the water that they have any difficulty in traveling. The action of the water during rough weather breaks up the ice and piles it up in great ridges. Over these the dogs cannot drag the sledges, nor do they attempt to do it. Experience has been a hard master to them, and they are not unmindful of what it teaches.

The dogs are fastened to the sledge by means of a harness made of the intestines of the seal. Their construction evinces an astonishing ingenuity. It is impossible for the dogs to get loose. Each one is attached to a single trace, which in turn is fastened to the sledge. They sometimes jump over each other's backs and get mixed up that way, but generally they are under the most perfect control, obeying every command of the owner.

They seemed, however, to be a snarling set, and would pitch into each other and fight on the smallest provocation. But the moment their owners would call out "Ka! Ka!" they would keep quiet and only occasionally snarl at each other.

Tom waited patiently till everything was ready, and then took his seat in the sledge pointed out to him. There were five dogs hitched to it, and

every dog seemed eager to start and outrun the other.

When well seated in the sledge, one of the Esquimaux got in and sat down in front of him.

He held no reins in his hand. But a long raw-hide whip was used to guide the dogs.

"If they run away and wreck us," said Tom, laughing, "we won't be much damaged, I guess."

The Esquimaux yelled at the dogs, and the five sledges dashed away at full speed.

"This is good sleigh riding," said Tom, "though I would enjoy it better in New York than at the North Pole. They don't get any other kind of riding at this place."

Over the hills and across the valleys they rushed, keeping in sight of the ice-packed sea all the time.

Tom kept a lookout for the *Jeannette*. He knew she was in the ice-pack and could not get away, at least not for several long months.

"She can't get away," he kept saying to himself, "and this coast is bound to lead me back to her some time or other. This wind is enough to split a man's face. I don't see why these people don't raise anchor and move further south. Surely they must know that it is warmer where the sun travels higher in the sky."

Thus ran his thoughts as he went speeding over the snow in the Esquimaux sledge. Over the dreary waste of snow they sped, nothing breaking the weary monotony till a sudden cry burst from the driver of the first sledge. The cry seemed to be understood by men and dogs alike. They all stopped and looked uneasily around.

Down in a ravine-like place they saw an immense polar bear scratching in the snow. He had probably buried something there and had come to get it.

"Boom! Boom!" cried the Esquimaux, running excitedly up to the sledge in which Tom was sitting half frozen. They sometimes killed the polar bear, but the bear more frequently killed them, and then got away, hence their very great fear of him.

Tom caught a glimpse of the bear and saw that he was a monster. Carefully examining his gun to see if everything was all right, he started toward the bear.

The bear had now seen him, and evidently thought he would get a fresh meal, as he turned and ambled toward the Esquimaux and their sledges.

Instantly the natives sprang into their sledges and dashed away, leaving Tom to the tender mercies of the bear. They halted on the top of the hill, however, and waited to see whether Tom or the bear would win.

"Ah! my fine fellow," said Tom, as the bear approached. "Come up near enough to shake hands with me. I want to make sure of your eye, or else you'll make sure of me. You can't stand a bullet in the eye any more than I can, and that I know well enough. Come on!"

The bear came within some ten or fifteen feet of him and then rose on his hind feet. He was an immense fellow, standing fully six feet on his haunches.

Tom was nervous, but he took deliberate aim and pulled the trigger.

The bear uttered a terrific roar and rolled over on the ground. He rolled and roared, tearing up the crusted snow in immense quantities.

Tom quickly reloaded the gun, while the Esquimaux danced about in the most frantic delight.

"Boom, boom!" they cried, "Ka Ka!" and then ran down toward the spot where Tom was quietly looking on.

The snow was red in many spots with the blood of the monster, which convinced the natives that the wound was a fatal one.

On a close examination it was seen that the bullet had entered the right eye and passed out at the back of the head, tearing right through the brain.

Tom was satisfied to wait for him to die. He had but a dozen more charges of ammunition left. They were too precious to be wasted. His life might yet depend on his weapons. To fire another shot into the writhing carcass of the monster would, doubtless, hasten his death. But he preferred to wait.

It took the beast fully two hours to die. Even then it took several harpoon thrusts to dispatch him.

When he breathed his last the Esquimaux danced around the carcass for joy. They danced around Tom, crying out loudly:

"Boom, boom!" in imitation of his gun, and proceeded soon afterwards to skin the carcass. It was a larger bear than any of the others he had killed.

The natives again feasted on raw meat to the full extent of their storage capacity, to the disgust of our hero. Oh, how hungry he was! But he could not eat. The blood-stained hands and

mouths of the natives sickened him so much that he could not have eaten a piece of the meat even had it been well broiled. They urged him to eat, making motions to convey the idea that he would starve if he did not. He shook his head and resolutely turned away.

"By the North Pole!" he muttered. "If I don't find the *Jeannette* soon I will starve. I can't eat raw meat as these people do. I'll cut off a good-sized chunk and let it freeze. Maybe I'll get a chance to cook some of it soon."

He cut off a ten-pound chunk and put it into his sledge. At the same time he cut other pieces and gave to the dogs.

The Esquimaux set up a yell of dismay, and sprang in among the dogs to take the meat away from them. They seemed terribly excited about it, and gave Tom to understand that they would not allow such wasteful extravagance. They would give nothing to the dogs but such parts as they could not eat themselves.

"If there is any part of a bear you will not eat I would like very much to see it," he replied. "You are more greedy and filthy in your appetites than the dogs are."

But the intestines were cut up and given to the dogs, who fought over and devoured them with a hungry eagerness that was truly alarming.

"If they should get hungry and bold enough to attack a man," Tom said to himself, as he watched the dogs, "there would be a slim chance of escape from them."

CHAPTER XII.

LOST AGAIN.

AFTER losing several hours over the bear, Tom managed to induce the Esquimaux to get into the sledges and move down the coast again. They literally left nothing but the blood of the bear on the snow. Sustenance was such a question with them that anything the human stomach could digest was prized above rubies.

Even wood was so scarce that every bone of every animal killed was utilized for some purpose in their domestic economy.

"I hope they will push forward now," said Tom, "and give me a chance to find the *Jeannette*. They are happy now, and laugh and jabber because they have got provisions enough for some time. I am glad they have, for they are poor enough in all conscience."

The dogs dashed away at full speed, having each gotten at least a half meal once in their lives. They skimmed along over the snow, yelping occasionally, keeping in sight of the sea all the way.

Suddenly they came across another bear walking leisurely along, as if he felt lonesome in that dreary waste of snow.

The natives at once halted, and clamored for "Boom" again.

"Confound the bear!" exclaimed Tom. "They'll lose four hours at least over this one. They can't eat any more, surely, and the sledges are pretty well loaded down now."

But there was no way in the world for him to back out. The natives would have thought it very strange had he refused to shoot the bear, and would have sought to kill him.

Getting out of the sledge, he proceeded to close up with the bear. The brute seemed really anxious to make his acquaintance and be sociable with him. In fact, he really appeared as if he wanted to take him in.

Tom was cautious. He knew that a mistake or a mishap would be the death of him. He also knew that if he could get close enough to get a bullet into the brain of the monster, that one shot would settle him.

When within ten feet of him the bear rose on his haunches, and started toward him with a fierce growl.

Tom took a deliberate aim, and the bullet went true to the mark. The bear roared and fell, beating the air savagely with his immense paws.

He was only about half the size of the first one, but the Esquimaux were just as jubilant as over the other. They praised Tom as the greatest hero of the world, and then fell to and gorged themselves again, to the inexpressible disgust of our hero.

This time, though, Tom determined the dogs should have a square meal. He cut up about fifty pounds for them, and drawing his revolver made the natives stand back till the half-starved canines had gorged themselves.

How the Esquimaux did howl and swear! Such extravagance seemed to portend a universal famine; but they had more provisions than they ever had before. Tom knew that, and was determined on that account.

Taking a good-sized lump of fat from the bear, he asked for some moss. That was an article they were never without, and in a few minutes

Tom had a good blaze. In this he succeeded in cooking a piece of bear meat. It was very palatable notwithstanding it was not salted, though smoked perfectly black.

By hard work he induced them again to get into their sledges.

To his supreme astonishment, however, he saw them turn round and proceed to return their homes.

"Here, you copper-colored sons of icebergs!" he exclaimed. "None of that now. What are you turning about for, eh? I want to go that way. What do you mean, anyhow? The voyage isn't ended yet. The port isn't even in sight."

They jabbered back at him, and managed by signs to make him understand that they were going home to unload the bear meat they had, and have a feast.

"I'm blest if you get me back home again," he replied. "I'm going down the coast at all hazards."

Clapping his revolver to the head of the Esquimau in the sledge with him, he made signs for him to continue southward as they had started.

The man trembled like a leaf, but he obeyed. The dogs obeyed the word of command, and started off at a full run, to the great surprise and disgust of the others.

"Faster!" cried Tom, and the Esquimau yelled at the dogs.

The canines sprang forward at full speed. Tom yelled too, and the strange voice made them go like the wind.

In ten minutes the others were left out of sight.

"That's all right now," said Tom. "I can manage this craft, and put down any mutiny on board. I couldn't manage the convoys so well." And then he turned his gaze seaward in search of the masts of the *Jeannette*.

By and by he noticed that the sledge was drawing away from the shore. He pointed in a direction parallel with the water, and said:

"That way—faster."

The man understood the sign and turned the dogs accordingly. As they turned the brow of the next hill they started down quite a steep declivity. The sledge rushed down on the dogs, and they had to run their best to keep from being run over.

Suddenly a bear and two young cubs confronted them.

The dogs at once saw the danger, and made a sudden turn to the left to get out of the way.

The sledge, however, keeled over and rolled, spilling both Tom and the driver out in the snow. The sledge struck one of the cubs, knocking it all in a heap, causing it to cry out.

The mother uttered a fierce roar and rushed to the side of her offspring. That saved Tom and his comrade. They had rolled almost to the feet of the bear.

Quick as a flash, Tom was on his feet, ready to defend himself. The Esquimau, however, uttered a yell of terror, and dashed away over the snow after his dog team.

The bear turned toward Tom with the fiercest energy he had yet seen any of those ferocious beasts display. She seemed to think he meant danger to her cubs.

"Hanged if I wouldn't like to shoot that rascal for running away!" exclaimed Tom. "Only the bear prevents me."

The bear rushed at him, and Tom felt almost inclined to run himself, fearing the brute would not rise on her hind feet and give him a good chance to make a shot that would tell. But, bear-like, the brute did rise within a few feet of him, and then he fired. The shot struck her nose, but she was so close the powder put out both eyes, and the bullet went crashing through her head.

With a frightful roar she rolled over in the snow, clawing fiercely at space. One of her cubs ran up to her, and was instantly clawed to death in the death agonies that prevented recognition of friend or foe.

She died soon, however, and then Tom looked around for the Esquimau who had run away after the sledge. He saw him nearly a mile away, having overtaken the sledge, speeding away in the direction he had come.

"Hello! This way!" he yelled, waving his cap to the Esquimau.

The native only yelled at his dogs:

"Ka-ka-ka!" and the sledge went skimming over the snow at tremendous speed.

"My God!" gasped Tom. "The rascal is leaving me here all alone! I may be fifty miles from the ship yet. Oh, if a bullet could reach him I'd stop him forever!"

CHAPTER XIII.

ON BOARD AGAIN.

WORDS fail to adequately express Tom's feelings on finding himself so shamefully deserted at that critical juncture. He really felt it more keenly than when he fell into the cave with the bear, for he knew that his comrades were within a mile of him, and that they would search until they found him. But now he knew they had given him up for dead, and were probably on board the *Jeannette*, beating their way through the great ice pack.

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, looking around over the dreary waste, "what shall I do? To tramp through this snow in search of the *Jeannette* is a terrible job. I am nearly dead for sleep, and yet if I go to sleep I will freeze to death, or may be surprised and killed by a white bear."

He reloaded the gun and then gazed around again, as if half expecting to find some kind of help. The outlook seemed more dreary than ever.

The young cub seemed to be the only living thing in sight. It had nestled down alongside its dead mother, and was watching Tom's movements with a very quiet interest.

"I might stay here and wrap up in the skin of that dead bear," he said, after gazing at the bear awhile, "and manage to keep from freezing. May be that rascal will tell his companions that I had killed another bear, and they'll come back to get the meat. The rascals care for nothing but their gluttonous stomachs. If they befriended me it is because they knew I could not only defend myself, but kill bears besides. I must find the *Jeannette*, or perish of cold and hunger!"

Taking out his knife, he proceeded to cut off a large chunk of the hind-quarter of the mother bear. That was to furnish him food. He also cut a long strip of skin, with which he made a cord.

Tying it around the young cub's neck, which snarled and scratched at him considerably, he started to resume his journey along the coast in search of the *Jeannette*.

The cub resisted, and growled and scratched like a little demon.

"Oh, come along," he said, pulling away, "I want your company. It's terribly lonesome. If I didn't have a gun and a chunk of meat to carry I would take you in my arms and try to tame you, but I can't, so come along."

But the youngster fought and scratched, growling and pulling for several minutes. The exertion made Tom sweat like a steam boiler, and prevented him from feeling the cold as much as he otherwise would have done.

By-and-by, however, the cub learned that it was more pleasant to trot along over the snow than to be dragged, and accordingly he trotted along like a sensible little fellow.

"That's right," said Tom; "even a bear can learn some things. I wish you could tell me if I am likely to find the *Jeannette* about here. Of course you don't know. Glad I can talk to you, anyhow. Blamed if you ain't better company than any Esquimau I ever saw. You don't smell half so bad, and I know just where to find you every time, for you are nothing but a bear, and will always act like a bear. I'd give you to Nellie as a present if I could once get you to New York. She'd be kind to you, and feed you like a mother."

Thus talked Tom as he wended his way over the dreary waste of trackless snow along the coast.

At last he climbed to the top of a hill, whence he looked away seaward and down the coast.

"Glory to God!" he yelled, "I see the *Jeannette*! Whoop!" and he danced a jig in the snow, the young cub sitting upon his haunches and eying him with a great deal of interest.

Away down the coast, several miles away, he saw the masts of a vessel, which, as near as he could judge, belonged to the *Jeannette*.

"Come along, cubby," called Tom, cheerily. "I don't care if it's a hundred miles away, as long as I can see it and know where it is. Come along."

The cub trotted along well enough, and Tom made good time. His heart was light enough now. He no longer had any fear of starving or freezing to death. He would soon reach the ship, where he could get food cooked as it ought to be.

Hour after hour passed, and at last he arrived abreast the vessel, which was locked in the ice-pack some three miles off shore.

He stood and gazed at the vessel and measured the distance with his eye. The surface of the ice-pack was rougher than anything he had ever seen on land. The wind and waves had piled the broken ice up, layer upon layer, until in some places it seemed to be fifty feet high.

"I'll get there even if I have to tunnel through the ice," he said. "I say, cubby, you were never on board ship, were you? I'll show you things

you never dreamed of, things you would never have heard of but for me. True, I killed your mother, but then your mother wanted to kill me, you know. Self-defense is allowed everywhere, and so you can't blame me very much, I know. Come along and let's see if I can't get you over these ridges of ice."

He started, pulling the cub along with him. The little fellow was getting ugly again. Hunger was the cause of his bad temper.

"We'll give you something to eat on board," said Tom, "so save your snarling till we get there."

He had hard work to get the cub over some of the ridges. The youngster would catch on projecting edges with his sharp, steel-like claws and hold on like grim death, growling and snarling, till Tom would have to kick him off and start anew.

At last he reached the top of a high ridge about half-way between the shore and the ship. He was too tired to go any farther with the snarling cub. The ship was but one and one-half miles distant, so he resolved to fire off his gun and see if it would not draw attention to him. He did so, and had the satisfaction of seeing two or three sailors run up on deck and gaze around upon the dreary scene.

"Ship ahoy!" cried Tom, waving his cap above his head.

The ship's glass was leveled at him.

They recognized him, of course, and three men were sent off to assist in getting him on board.

"Blow my eyes, mate," cried the ship's carpenter, as soon as he came within speaking distance of our hero, "what craft is that you have in tow?"

"One of these Arctic pirates," replied Tom. "Have you got any grog or anything to eat?"

"Plenty on board. Where are the others?"

"All dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed all three at once.

"Eat up by the bears. I then eat the bears and brought one of the young ones home with me."

"That's a hard gale you're blowing, mate," replied the carpenter, looking Tom full in the face, as though he half suspected him of being deranged.

"So it is, mate. I don't know where the others are. I got lost from the party, and couldn't find them, so I managed to work my way down the coast until I saw the masts of the ship. Take this cub and pull it in. I'm broke down entirely."

The carpenter took the cub, and the other two relieved him of his gun, the chunk of bear meat, and his belt and revolver.

"Oh, I feel as light as a feather now," he exclaimed; "and could run a mile without stopping!"

"You'd better go slow and port your helm," suggested one of the sailors. "The ice is rough."

"And dangerous in some places," remarked the other. "Sharp edges sometimes cut deep when you fall upon them."

"I am not going to run. I am too tired for that," and he plodded his way over the ice and snow to the side of the ship, which was frozen fast in the ice-pack.

The sailors crowded around him and gave him a hearty welcome.

"Where did you leave the captain?" the first mate asked.

"I don't know," he replied. "I suppose it must be at least a hundred miles from here where I lost the party."

"How came you to get lost?"

"I fell into a cave—a crevice of ice—into which I was peeping to get a shot at a bear, and it took me about two days to cut steps in the ice by which I climbed out."

"But why didn't they find you? Didn't they look for you at all?"

"I don't know. When I got out the snow was nearly two feet deep on the ice."

"Was there a bear in there?"

"Yes—the biggest kind, too."

"The deuce!"

"Yes. I fell right in on top of him. He sprang up and ran to the other side of the cave, and waited just long enough for me to pick up the gun, when he ran at me. I fired, and the bullet went into his eye and through his brain. Of course it killed him."

"Well, it's the most remarkable escape I ever heard of," said the mate. "How did you manage to get here and—"

"Give me something to eat," interrupted Tom. "I am almost on the verge of starvation."

"Yes—yes—of course," and he was hurried down into the kitchen, where the cook was broiling a piece of the bear meat he had brought with him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RIVALS MEET AGAIN.

Tom did ample justice to the bear steak and strong coffee and bread, whilst the others stood around and listened to his strange story of adventures among the Esquimaux and polar bears. They could not understand how one man could live through such terrible perils, and, had they not seen him skillfully kill a polar bear, single-handed and alone, with nothing but a sailor's knife, they would have doubted the truth of his story.

The story of the accidental discharge of his revolver in the hands of a young Esquimaux girl, shooting off an Esquimaux dog's tail, created great merriment among them. His story of their way of eating and living created a sensation, for they had but faint ideas of the characters of those people living in the regions of eternal snow and ice.

Tom had made up his mind to say nothing about Ned Truxton's connection with his disappearance.

"I don't know exactly how it happened," he reasoned. "It may have been an accident, and poor Ned himself may be dead. If he is alive I can't understand why he didn't answer my call. If another bear was after him he ought to have shot him. I can't understand it, and won't say a word about it till Captain De Long returns, when I will tell him everything."

It took Tom at least two days to get over the fatigue of his long and wearisome tramp over the snow. But when he told how the mother of the young cub and another cub were killed and lying dead in the snow some ten or fifteen miles back up the coast, the mate resolved to send a party for them.

"They are frozen hard by this time," he said, "and as fresh as ever. It will be a treat to get such a quantity of fresh meat on board."

"Yes," said Tom, "and there need be no trouble about finding them, as my tracks can be seen all the way. I'm only afraid the rascally Esquimaux have been there already."

The mate sent off a party of five men, well armed, dragging a sledge after them, and then the old quiet humdrum life on ship-board commenced again for Tom.

But his experience had made him appreciate the luxury of a home on ship-board. He would not exchange it for all the Arctic regions.

The party returned, bringing the mother and cub with them on the sledge. Both carcasses were frozen stiff, and had not been touched by any animals or men.

"Now we'll have a change of diet!" exclaimed the mate, as the two carcasses were hauled on board.

The young cub Tom had captured and brought with him seemed to know the carcass of his dead mother, as he set up a piteous whining, and tried to get loose from his fastening.

Such a time as the sailors had in skinning that frozen bear and cub! If the reader doesn't think it a hard thing to do, let him try his hand at skinning a frozen rabbit or squirrel, or a Chatham street Jew. He will find that he has a contract on hand that he would be anxious to sublet at much less rates than he took it for.

The fresh meat lasted ten days, during which time they feasted to their hearts' content. Tom did his full share of the eating, and took special delight in taming and training the young cub, which began to grow very fond of him.

One day the lookout from the crow-nest in the rigging descried the captain's party several miles distant, returning to the ship.

Instantly there was bustle and excitement on board the *Jeannette*.

All hands were mustered to receive and welcome the captain.

"Please don't mention my presence here until I come on deck, and surprise them," Tom asked of the mate and crew as they all stood on the deck.

The mate turned to the men, and asked them to say nothing till Tom put in his appearance. They promised to respect his wishes, and Tom went below to await the captain's presence on board.

Captain De Long was received with a hearty welcome by the crew, as he was a humane man who looked after the comfort of his men, and watched over their health, as if every man were a part of his own family.

The bo'son was the next man to follow the captain on board. Then came Professor Newcomb and the others.

"Poor Tom is gone," said the bo'son to the first mate, as he grasped his hand. "He died with a big polar bear. He was the bravest lad that ever lived."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the mate. "Who saw him die?"

"Ned Truxton. He saw him clinch with the

bear, and the two rolled into a hole in the ice, where the current took 'em under."

The mate was astonished.

What a different story Tom had told?

"Did you see the hole, bo'son?" he finally asked.

"Yes—we all went with Ned to the place, and saw where they both fell. Tom was as brave a man as ever lived."

"You may well say that, bo'son," remarked the mate. "How will the professor get along without him?"

Just then the bo'son caught sight of the young cub.

"Where, in the name of old Neptune, did you get it, mate?" he exclaimed on seeing the young bear, with his brown eyes and snowy fleece, quietly gazing at the new arrivals.

"One of the hands brought him in two weeks ago," replied the mate, as Ned Truxton came up and stopped to gaze at the cub.

"How are you, Ned?" greeted the mate, grasping his hand. "I am glad to see you back again."

"Thank you," said Ned. "I am glad to get back again. I don't want to leave the ship again either, as long as we remain in this region."

"Why not?"

"Too cold and too dangerous; too many bears. I never see a white bear now that I don't shudder and think of poor Tom."

"The bo'son says you saw Tom and the bear clinch and go under together," said the mate.

"Yes; Tom was but a mere infant in the arms of the brute. The bear was as large as an ox."

"Why didn't Tom run?"

"I don't know. He shot the bear and then drew his knife as the bear charged on him."

"It must have been horrible!"

"I shall never forget it as long as I live," and Ned gave a shudder as he spoke.

Just then Tom came up from the cabin and walked up behind Ned and stopped. The bo'son glared at him as though he were one from the dead.

Ned wheeled around to see what the bo'son was gazing at, and found himself face to face with Tom.

With a yell of terror he sprang away and ran to the ship's side as if with the intention of leaping overboard.

His cry had alarmed the others, and every eye was turned in his direction. One of the sailors caught and prevented him from leaping overboard.

"Blast my two eyes!" cried the bo'son, glaring wildly at Tom, "is it you, lad, or your ghost?"

"It's me, bo'son, and as far from being a ghost as you are," replied Tom, who grasped his hand and shook it heartily.

"Why, blow me, lad!" cried the bo'son, "I—I've sprung a leak!" and tears of joy burst from the gallant sailor's eyes.

Captain De Long heard the news and ran up on deck.

"Tom, my boy!" exclaimed he, grasping his hand. "I've put you down in the log-book as dead!"

"Put it down again, captain," replied Tom, "that it's the bear, not me, that's dead. I'm all right, as you see."

"How was it? I don't understand it. Truxton said you and the bear went down together."

"No, the bear went down first, and I followed," said Tom.

"How was it you didn't drown?"

"Because I climbed out again."

"Climbed out!" and the whole crew crowded around in open-mouthed wonder.

"Yes, I killed the bear, and then cut steps in the ice with my knife and climbed out. I couldn't find any of you. Ned was gone, and the ground was covered with snow."

"Here, Ned Truxton!" called Captain De Long. "Come here. Tom is all right."

Ned came forward, his face as white as a sheet.

"Hello, Ned!" cried Tom, cheerily, grasping his hand. "I got away with that bear in a twinkling—blew the top of his head off!"

"How did you get out, Tom? I was sure you had gone to Davy Jones' forever."

"Oh, I cut holes in the ice and climbed out. Why didn't you answer my call?"

"Couldn't. Didn't hear you. I had to run like a comet from t'other bear."

"T'other bear! Were there two of them?" Tom asked, in the greatest surprise.

"Yes—he came up behind and had almost got his big paws on me when I made a spring and got away. I thought I heard you call out as you went down, but I couldn't stop. I thought our time had come. I was so sure you were dead that I really thought you were your ghost when I first saw you just now."

"Oh, I'm not a ghost yet," said Tom, laugh-

ing, walking forward to greet Professor Newcomb.

CHAPTER XV.

MIXED MYSTERIES.

PROFESSOR NEWCOMB was overjoyed at seeing Tom, whom he had given up as dead. He caught him in his arms and swung him around on the deck.

"Back from the grave!" he cried. "I'm glad to see you, my boy."

"Back from a bear's belly, rather!" exclaimed Ned Truxton.

"Well, isn't that a grave from which few ever return?" retorted the overjoyed professor.

"Yes," replied the bo'son. "There's no resurrection there."

Every man of the party took Tom's hand and spoke sincerely of their pleasure at finding him alive again.

But they could not understand how he managed to get out of that hole in the ice, where they had looked down, hours after he was missed, and failed to see either him or the bear. They promised themselves to ask him how he managed to get out of the hole.

But Ned Truxton well knew that they had all looked in the wrong place. Tom thought they meant the cave when they spoke of looking down into the hole for him.

"By my soul!" mentally exclaimed Ned, as soon as he was alone, "he thinks it was an accident on my part, and does not know of the story I told Captain De Long about his falling into and disappearing under the water. Luckily for me there was a bear in both cases. I'm no nearer getting him out of the way than at first. Will he ever get at the truth from hearing the men talk about it? I'll tell him, if he asks me anything about it, that I was so excited I did not know what I said. My God, it's a narrow escape! If he does not suspect me I am all right. I'll watch and see if he does."

Tom acted as though he did not suspect anything wrong on the part of Ned Truxton. He did not really suspect him of attempting to kill him, for such a thought never entered his head. He could assign no reason for such a course on Ned's part. That another bear had appeared on the scene he did not believe, as Ned could not have escaped from him. Besides, no bear was in sight a few minutes before except the one he was in pursuit of.

That evening he met Ned face to face on the deck, and asked:

"Ned Truxton, how come you to push me in on that bear?"

"I ran against you by accident in my eagerness to get out of the—"

"Hold on, Ned," said Tom, laying a hand on Truxton's arm. "There was no bear there."

"Yes, there was—a big fellow."

"But I know better," said Tom, with a great deal of firmness. "Tell me, now, why you did not bring Captain De Long and the others to the cave instead of leading them to a big hole that opened down into the water, where, you said, I and the bear had disappeared together?"

Ned Truxton glared at Tom in profound amazement, and asked:

"Tom, did they tell you I did that?"

"Yes."

"Then that shows how bad scared I was. The truth is I was so badly frightened that I don't know what I did. You surely cannot think I did it on purpose?"

"I really don't know what to think, Ned. It looks strange to me, for I am sure there was no other bear there but the one we were after."

"That's where you are mistaken, Tom, for when you were peering down into the cave another enormous bear came round from the lower side of the iceberg and started towards me. I was so frightened that I really don't know what I did. I thought only how I could save my life."

"Did the bear follow you?"

"Yes, nearly a mile. He came so close to me that I turned and fired at him. The flash and the wound so astonished him, I suppose, that he turned square off to the right, and I ran on again."

"That was natural, of course," said Tom. "You see, I couldn't understand why you pushed me, and then wouldn't answer my calls for you. Then again, when they told me that you had led them to another place to look for me, I really couldn't make it out."

"So you couldn't. Hanged if I can understand it myself. I know one thing, though—that you have no ground to suspect me of pushing you on purpose, for we were good friends, and—"

"Yes—yes—I may have wronged you, but I said nothing about it to anybody."

"Well, I am glad you did not, as I am ashamed

of my cowardice, anyhow. You see, I am not a polar bear-hunter, and that was the first time I ever had one after me, and I hope it was the last one."

Tom laughed good-naturedly, and gave his hand to Truxton.

"They are bad customers to handle, and I don't blame you. I don't want to go bear-hunting with you again, however."

"I don't want to go, either," Ned replied. "I'm simply a sailor—not a bear-hunter."

Tom left him and went to the bo'son's quarters.

"Ha—ha—ha!" chuckled Ned to himself. "That settles it. I am out of that scrape. But I'll make sure work of it next time. I thought the bear would make a meal of him and end the matter. If I can't get her I don't care to live. Life would not be worth living. To know that she was another's would make me grow wild. I would kill a dozen men and forever destroy my own soul to possess her love. With him out of the way, I can easily win her. He shall not leave these icy regions alive if I can help it. And I don't intend to be suspected, either. It's all wrong, I know, but I can't help it. My future happiness depends on it."

The deep-dyed villain was overjoyed at having dissipated Tom's suspicions of him, and went to his berth with murder still in his heart.

Several days after the return of Captain De Long and his exploring party, several Esquimaux came over the ice to the *Jeannette*. They manifested the greatest curiosity about everything. The interpreter of the expedition asked them to come aboard, and they did so.

Tom instantly recognized the man who had run away with the sledge and left him all alone in the snow, without any means of locomotion other than his feet.

His wrath burst forth at once.

"You coppery-skinned whelp!" he cried, rushing up and planting a blow on his face that laid him sprawling on the deck. "You'll leave me to perish in the snow, will you? Take that and smoke it!"

The Esquimaux set up a most incessant jabbering, and appeared to be on the verge of running away.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the professor.

"Blow my eyes!"

"Shiver my timbers!"

"Great Neptune!" and many other similar exclamations burst from the crew.

"What does this mean?" angrily demanded Captain De Long.

"Pardon me, captain," said Tom, "but I really could not help it. That was the rascal who ran away with the sledge and left me to foot it fifteen miles through the snow. I couldn't help it, and if you will only allow me, I'll cut the fat little rascal up into blubber chunks!"

"You have done very wrong, sir," said the captain, sternly. "Go below, and wait for orders."

Tom went below, and then the captain instructed the interpreter to say to the visitors that the young man simply punished the Esquimaux for leaving him to perish in the snow.

"He served him right," said the professor, when he got the history of the case. "I would have been tempted to shoot him myself."

The explanation of the interpreter did not quite satisfy the Esquimaux, as they said the owner of the sledge had the right to do as he pleased with it.

So he had, but as they had reaped the fruits of their guest's skill with the gun, he had the right to demand the use of the sledge, under the circumstances.

They demanded ever so many things as indemnity, but Captain De Long firmly declined, and they went away vowing vengeance against Tom, if they ever caught him again.

"Ah!" muttered Ned Truxton, "there is another chance for me. His taking off will be laid at the door of these miserable people. They may even do the work for me. I'll look to it that between us he shall not escape. I hate him with a deathless hate, and—"

"What for?" demanded the bo'son, coming up softly behind him.

Ned sprang around, as if stung, and found himself face to face with the bo'son, who had overheard him.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BATTLE OF THE ICEBERGS.

THE bo'son was more astonished than Truxton was, and asked:

"What's the matter with you? You act like a cat-rigged boat in a squall."

"You startled me," said Truxton, "by speaking so close behind me."

"That's a bad sign, Truxton," said the bo'son, shaking his head. "Who do you hate with such a deadly hatred?"

"That fellow out there—that one with the harpoon in his hand."

"Oh, the one Tom knocked down?"

"Yes; Tom ought to have killed him on the spot, even if he swung from the yardarm for it."

"Why so? The fellow didn't know any better. It's the way they all do, I guess."

"The man that would leave another to perish in the snow that way ought to be shot down like a dog."

"Oh, I agree with you there. I've known even white men to do as mean a trick as that."

"It doesn't seem possible."

"Hardly, yet it's true. So you should not waste all your hate on these poor copper-colored people who don't know as much as we do," and the bo'son took another squint at him from a corner of his weather eye and went below.

"Ned Truxton," hissed Ned to himself, "you're a condemned fool! The next thing you know you'll be giving yourself away altogether, and get yourself into no end of trouble. The bo'son startled me worse than the growl of a polar bear behind me would have done. I hope he will say nothing about it."

The bo'son had grown suspicious of Truxton, but said nothing about it to any one. He resolved to watch and see what would turn up.

On the third day after these occurrences the wind rose and blew a fierce gale. It seemed to come across the Arctic Ocean, as even the spray, as it beat up against the wall of ice seaward, turned into icicles as it fell back. Oh, it was a breath from the everlasting icebergs. Cold was not the word to express it. Even the timbers of the ship seemed to congeal. The crew never felt such weather before. They had to cower around the stove below and listen to the sighing of the wind as it careened over the dreary waste of snow outside.

But a watch was kept constantly on deck. They were changed often, on account of the cold. Tom was on the watch, though he was not compelled to do so. Suddenly he saw some great icebergs away out at sea, coming in before the wind.

"There's going to be a collision between icebergs," he remarked, as he looked at the mountains of ice. "I'm glad we are locked in this great pack of ice here, as those bergs can't get within a mile of us, and we can't be driven in any nearer to shore than we are."

On, on came an enormous iceberg, making direct for the ship. Tom stood quietly watching, waiting to see what would be the result when such a mountain would strike the great ice-pack in which the *Jeannette* was caught.

Still farther out to sea were other icebergs moving before the gale. The angry sea dashed against them as if anxious to break them to pieces and destroy them. Tom forgot all about the cold in his admiration of the grand panorama before him.

Suddenly the nearest mountain of ice struck the seaward side of the ice-pack. At first he heard a grinding, cracking noise, followed by pieces of ice, varying from the size of a man's fist to that of a hog'shead, bound hundreds of feet in the air and fall back on the frozen pack.

Bang! bang!—boom!—crash! and it seemed as if the whole world was going to pieces. The terrified crew came running up from below to see what was going on, and stood aghast at the terrible spectacle. Great mountains of ice were rolled up on the ice-pack, and the entire field seemed on the point of being driven ashore.

The *Jeannette*, though frozen in and held as in a grip of steel, was actually loosened and pushed up clear out of the water. The pressure seemed to have the effect of crumbling the ice into small pieces.

Captain De Long seemed to be uneasy, and when the *Jeannette* began to rise as though squeezed out of the water and showed signs of careening, the crew became panic-stricken and leaped overboard on to the cakes of ice.

"Steady, there!" cried the bo'son, whose idea was never to desert a ship as long as it was above water.

But he might as well have yelled at the great iceberg itself. That demoralized crew went over the sides of the ship like rats with an army of cats behind them.

Tom was on duty as watch, and never moved an inch from his post. Captain De Long looked at him a moment in silent admiration, and then said:

"You are made of the right stuff, sir!"

"Thanks, sir. I never desert a post or a companion," replied Tom.

"I believe you," and the captain glanced around at Ned Truxton, who had run up on a

large snow-crusting boulder of ice and was gazing seaward with a white, scared face.

In a few minutes the force of the collision was broken, and the *Jeannette* settled back into the water again as before.

"That was a terrible crash," said the captain, "and our safety lay in being locked in this ice-pack. I am sorry, though, the wind is not off-shore, as it would then have driven some of this ice away, and given us a chance to get to sea again."

The noise that followed each collision was terrible. Iceberg after iceberg came in from the unknown sea beyond, and crashed against the others, until the seaward side of the ice-pack had an impenetrable and unpassable wall of ice two or three hundred feet high, entirely shutting out all view of the sea.

"It will break the fury of the wind," said Captain De Long, very quietly, as he gazed at the great wall, "and it will not be so cold, perhaps."

"But will it not bury the ship forever in this pack?" the professor asked.

"No, I think not. They will drift away again, or they may hold together till a contrary wild wind drives them off."

"I have not been uneasy till now, captain," said the professor, "and I will dismiss my fears if you say there is no danger."

"I cannot say there is no danger," replied the captain, "because there is danger here all the time. But there's nothing you need fear just now, for these icebergs will go away and do us no more harm than has already been done."

"What harm has been done?"

"Indeed I don't know. The vessel has been subjected to a terrible pressure. Bo'son, go down and see if there's a leak anywhere."

"Aye, sir," and the bo'son promptly went below.

In a moment he returned and saluted the captain, saying:

"There are no men below, sir."

"Ah—yes—they have all deserted the ship. Call them on board again."

The bo'son piped all hands on deck, and in an instant every man began to climb on board again.

"Look out there, or you'll go through the ice!" cried the bo'son, as Ned Truxton and another man started toward the ship's side over a part of the ice that had been broken up.

The words had scarcely died away from the lips of the bo'son, when Ned broke through and sunk to his armpits. Once under the broken ice, no power on earth could save him.

Quick as a flash he cried out:

"Help! Help!"

Tom rushed to the side of the ship and saw his danger. He was gradually sinking deeper every moment. Without another thought, either of the past or the future, he seized the end of a rope, which hung down far enough to reach the ice, and sprang over the side of the vessel.

Ned was too near frozen to even grasp the rope, and so Tom caught him by the collar of his pea-jacket and called out cheerily to the crew:

"Pull away, mates!"

They did pull, and in a few minutes both were hauled on board, almost dead with cold.

Their clothes were instantly frozen as far as they were wet.

"Tom," said Ned, grasping the hand of our hero, "you have done me a good turn; I'll show you what I think of it some day."

"That's all right, mate," said Tom; "I couldn't stand and see you go to Davy Jones, you know."

"Well, you came near going to Davy's with me."

"So I did; but then we didn't go after all, you see," and Tom turned away to go down below to warm himself and put on dry clothing.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD BO'SON'S PHILOSOPHY.

THE gallant rescue of Ned Truxton was witnessed by every one on board the *Jeannette*.

Captain De Long and all the officers congratulated Tom on his heroic conduct, and the professor told him he was prouder of him than ever.

"Oh, I don't deserve any thanks," replied Tom.

"The man who would stand by and see a mate drown ought to be made chewing-gum of by sharks."

"Aye, and I'd like to throw such a man to the sharks!" exclaimed the old bo'son.

"So would I," put in the ship's carpenter.

The crew cheered him every time they saw him that day, as it was a very dangerous rescue.

Ned was loud in his praises of the gallantry of the young hero, and vowed everlasting gratitude to him.

"I would risk my very life for him any time

after this," he said, "and do anything for him he would ask of me. The man who risks his life for me can count me as his friend till death."

When Tom and Ned had put on dry clothes, they met again round the stove below, and Ned renewed his expressions of gratitude. Tom repeatedly told him he did only his duty, and would do again the same thing for any man on board.

The gale lasted some twenty-four hours, and then died away.

It had driven an immense field of ice against the great ice-pack in which the vessel was caught. They could not get a glimpse of the sea even from the masthead of the ship, so high was the wall of ice on that side of them.

But in another day the wind changed, and a hard blow came from exactly an opposite direction, to the great delight of all on board the vessel. One by one the great icebergs began to drift apart and gradually move seaward.

"Good-bye, old Boreas," cried the bo'son. "I never did love you, and like you less now than I ever did."

"Them's my sentiments, bo'son," said Tom, laughing. "This is the best thing ever happened to us. How long will we have to remain here in this ice-pack, do you think?"

"Blow me if I know, lad," was the reply. "I don't know how to get my bearing in this latitude. The sun doesn't rise and set here as it does in a Christian country, but just hangs around the horizon, peeping over the water as if it was afraid of these icebergs. Why don't it just get up and melt 'em away and give us clear sailing?"

"Oh, we're at the North Pole, you know," said Tom, "where the sun never rises high."

"I know that as well as you do, but why in thunder don't it rise and melt this ice and—"

"The earth is round, you know, and—"

"Avast, there! Don't I know the thing's a football as well as you do, lad! What I want to get at is this: Look at all this ice. Everybody wants to know something about this North Pole. I don't believe there is any pole, and we are not going to find one, either. But why doesn't the sun come round and clear out this channel, and—"

"Because the earth revolves only in one direction, you know."

"Yes—but why don't it revolve so as to give every country a bit of warm sunshine?"

"Because Nature did not intend that all—"

"But why didn't Nature do it? That's what I'm wanting to know. Why waste all this labor of making a country just to freeze it up again?"

"Ah! You are too much for me there, bo'son," said Tom, shaking his head. "God seems to have given every kind of climate to the world and people to inhabit them."

"I wouldn't live in this latitude for all the seals, bears and whales in the Arctic Ocean, and would not thank God for the gift."

"But you forget that the Esquimaux think this is the greatest country in the world."

"I do not believe they think so, for they wrap up in all the skins they can get hold of and yet complain of being cold at times. They don't know of any better climate, or they'd go to it. Tut, tut, lad. This thing is mixed up wrong. The sun ought to heat the world through and through, and let everybody get warm."

"It would certainly be more comfortable," remarked Tom, amused at the philosophy of the old bo'son.

"Of course it would. This would be a land of flowers instead of ice then, and a great people would live here to greet the ships of all nations as they came into port. There'd be pretty girls to gladden the hearts of the sailors as they went ashore, instead of the ill-favored and bad smelling daughters of a snow-bank. God deliver me from being king of such a country!"

"You wouldn't have it as a gift with a crown?" Tom asked.

"No. The crown would freeze on your head, and your queen would freeze in your arms. Everything freezes here in this blasted country. I am chilled now to my marrow bones, and I am ready to send the whole country to Davy Jones' locker."

"Why, you are quite bitter, bo'son," said Tom. "Why shouldn't I be? Have I been warm since we came here? Have you been warm? If I had my way, I'd turn this big ball round till I got a square deal at the sun. I'd either freeze old Sol, or else have a thaw for this blasted, frozen solitude."

They were both startled by a roar of laughter, and looking around, saw that the professor had been a listener to their conversation.

"Bo'son," said the professor, "I beg pardon for interrupting your talk, but I could not help it. So you are tired of this voyage?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply, "and so are you. I don't see any good of it."

"It's in the interest of science, you know—of geographical knowledge."

"Science be blowed! What can science do against icebergs? Will it thaw this ice-pack? Will it keep people warm? Will it locate the pole and induce the sun to shine upon it?"

The professor was puzzled to know how to answer the honest old sailor. He could have gone into a long dissertation on the benefits to be derived from the exact location of the North Pole, and an open polar sea, but he never could have made him see any practical benefit from it. The country was frozen up. That was enough for him to know. If some way to thaw it out could be devised, it would be all right. If not it was no good, and not worth the expense of one voyage to find out all about it. The fact was the old bo'son was cold—hadn't been able to get warm for several days, hence his breaking out in unstinted condemnation of the whole northern world.

When the professor related the conversation to Captain De Long, the latter laughed till the tears came into his eyes.

"He is one of the best and bravest men I ever knew," said the captain. "He is not an educated man, and does not understand the relations of science to geography. He wants to see more sunshine and less ice, as we all do."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE icebergs being dispersed again and the weather more settled, Captain De Long made up his mind to make another attempt to find the open polar sea, and explore the unknown land to the north of him.

Accordingly he made preparations for another trip in sledges. The bo'son, with a half dozen men, were sent out, with the interpreter, to get dogs and sledges and native drivers.

Tom and Ned were sent along with him, with four others.

The bo'son relied on Tom to pilot the way to the small collection of huts where he found shelter after he escaped from the bear.

"It was not far from the coast," said Tom, "so I don't see how we can fail to find them. We only have to keep up along the coast and keep a good lookout for them. The huts are low, and covered with snow. We might miss them altogether, but I guess there'll be some signs of life about them."

They were all armed, except that there were only two guns in the party. The trouble of carrying a gun in such a latitude is greater than one can imagine. In the first place, a piece of iron gets so cold as to be painful to the touch; in the second place, one wants the full use of his arms in making his way through deep snow any considerable distance.

The others carried revolvers in their belts, so as not to be unarmed in case of danger.

The march was a long and painful one, but they had taken the precaution of providing against hunger—they carried plenty of pemmican along with them.

Pemmican is well cured dried beef, chopped very fine, with melted tallow poured over it. The tallow held it together like cheese, and the taste was good and savory.

This was all the food they carried with them, except coffee. They obtained water by melting snow.

When out about twenty-four hours they came across four sledges, with four dogs each attached to them. The Esquimaux were greatly excited over the appearance of the whites, and stopped to see them.

The interpreter told them that they were after three sledges, with drivers and dogs, to go on a journey north of them, and would pay very liberally for the use of them. They were suspicious at first, and shook their heads, saying:

"We must go hunt for meat. Food all gone. No seals, no bear, no walrus—no blubber!"

Without blubber, or fat of some kind, the Esquimaux can have no fire. A whale cast up by the waves on their frozen shores is a coal mine to them. They would get fuel to last a moderate-sized village through one of their long winters.

"We will give you both meat and blubber," said the bo'son, through the interpreter.

At that they opened wide their eyes and glanced eagerly around in search of the promised food and fuel.

"They want to see some of it," remarked the interpreter. "They won't eat our salted meat, you know."

"We'll give 'em a bear, or something else," the bo'son replied.

The interpreter talked with them for some time, and finally concluded a bargain with them. They agreed to go with them for a compensation in meat, knives, and whip-stocks.

So little wood-growth was there in the Arctic regions, that even a stick large enough to make a whip-handle was a great rarity with them.

"It's all right. They'll go," said the interpreter, turning to the bo'son.

"I'm glad of that. It will save us a deal of trouble in getting others. Come on, then, and let's go back to the ship."

They turned and started back to the ship, the bo'son in great glee at his success in getting the sledges for the proposed journey northward.

But they were not destined to get back as easily as they had come.

A sudden snow-storm came up—or, rather, came down. It came so fast and furious—the flakes being so large and feathery—that they could not see fifty feet around them.

The bo'son had to consult the compass in order to make sure of his direction. But in an hour the snow was so deep they could travel only with the greatest difficulty.

Every minute the snow grew deeper and deeper, and the bo'son began to grow uneasy. It was intensely cold, and every man seemed to think that his very marrow was freezing.

"We'll all freeze to death here," said Ned Truxton, shivering and shaking like one with the ague.

"It feels very much like it," said the bo'son. "I don't really know what to do," and, turning to the interpreter, added: "See what these natives can do. We can't travel in this deep snow."

The interpreter turned to the natives and asked them what they should do to keep from freezing.

"Build snow houses and stay in them till the snow crusts," they replied.

"What!" the bo'son exclaimed, "stay in a snow house! Why, we'd freeze to death in an hour in one!"

"There you are mistaken," said the interpreter.

"A snow house is really very warm, where several persons huddle together in them."

"That's something I did not know before," the bo'son said. "Let's go to work and build one or two if necessary, and lose no time at it."

The Esquimaux went to work immediately clearing away the snow down to the ground, and then commenced building a wall of snow all round the cleared space, packing it with their hard dirty hands so as to make it hold well together.

The wall went rapidly up in a circle till it reached four feet above the ground, and then it began to take a bee-hive shape, closing at the top.

This done, they cut a hole large enough at the bottom for a man to crawl through.

"Ah! I used to build such things in my young days in the wet sand," remarked the old bo'son. "I'll soon see whether one can live in a snow house without freezing to death."

He crawled in, and was followed by Tom and the others.

"Why, it feels warmer already," exclaimed the bo'son.

"Indeed it does," assented Tom. "It breaks the wind off. I never mind the weather when the winds don't blow."

The entire party crawled in except the Esquimaux, who went quietly to work building another one against the first one for themselves and their dogs. In an incredibly short space of time they had completed the second house, cut a connecting door between them, as well as one on the outside.

The sledges were cleverly thrust inside, and the dogs followed. The Esquimaux followed the dogs, and all lay down in a huddle together.

"I wonder if one could sleep in here without freezing?" Ned Truxton asked of the interpreter.

"Yes," was the reply. "You can sleep in your blanket as comfortably as in your berth!"

After an hour or so they all found the snow houses comfortably warm, much to their surprise. Their bodies heated the close air, and the place was as pleasant as they could desire under the circumstances.

"Well!" exclaimed Tom, "one need not freeze to death in this country after all, if he has sense enough to build a snow house and something to eat when he gets into it."

"That reminds me that I am hungry," said the bo'son. "Some pemmican would not be bad to eat just now."

"That it wouldn't!" exclaimed several others, and the article was produced, each man taking the share allotted him. After eating they took a little snow-water, and then spent several hours in conversation about individual adventures among the icebergs.

"I am very sleepy," said Ned Truxton.

"So am I."

"And I," repeated the others.

"Then turn in and sleep," said the bo'son; "sleep is as necessary as food and raiment. The Esquimaux are all asleep, I see."

So they were, and snoring like so many fog-horns.

They rolled in their blankets, and were soon in the land of dreams.

It was some eight or ten hours ere they awoke again. The snow had fallen in such vast quantities as to close the outer door of the snow hut and bury the hut itself out of sight.

The air was very close in the small space in which seven men had slept so long.

"Whew!" exclaimed the old bo'son, "I must have a whiff of fresh air if I freeze my nose off," and with that he commenced to scratch at the door of the hut.

"It's all filled with snow," he said; "but I can soon clear that away."

He dug away with great energy for several minutes till he found himself outside the hut, and in a very dark channel.

"Come back, bo'son," said Tom. "The interpreter says that you must wait till the snow crusts."

"That's true," was the reply; "but I want to get a whiff of fresh air."

"Stand on your feet and maybe you can get your head through," suggested Tom, not dreaming there was such a fall of snow as that.

The bo'son did so, and, to his dismay, found the snow some five feet deep on a level.

"Great Neptune!" he exclaimed, "I never saw such a snow-fall! Why, we're snowed in for the winter!"

"No," said the interpreter, "the snow will soon crust, and then we can move again."

"I hope you are right, for we can't navigate such a sea of snow as this, that's certain."

The bo'son got his fresh air, but the scene he had looked upon discouraged him immensely. He was silent and moody for some time, and would not have much to say.

Another twenty-four hours passed, and then the Esquimaux ascertained that the snow was sufficiently crusted to bear the weight of the sledges. But it was concluded to wait several hours longer, to make sure there would not be any breaking through.

Suddenly there was a series of yelps among the dogs in the next hut, accompanied by yells from the Esquimaux.

"My God!" exclaimed Truxton, springing up. "What does that mean?"

They were soon to find out.

An immense polar bear had dropped down on them through the roof of the hut.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNDER THE SNOW.

ONLY a few seconds after the first yelp of the dogs in the next hut elapsed ere the fierce growl of the polar bear was heard. It sent a thrill of terror to every heart, for the disadvantage of their situation flashed over every one in a moment.

"A bear! a bear!" shrieked the Esquimaux, in their native tongue, breaking through the snow-wall that divided the two huts.

The interpreter instantly put their cry into English, so that all might know their danger.

But they had all heard the bear's growl, and that was understood in its native language with intense distinctiveness.

"Oh, my God, let me get out!" cried some one of the party, making a dash for the opening just made by the bo'son. He disappeared in a moment, and then another followed. In another second several of the Esquimaux dogs darted through the hut and disappeared the same way.

The Esquimaux themselves followed, and then the entire party scrambled out, breaking through the wall and climbing upon the crusted snow as quickly as they could.

During all this time the fierce growls of the bear continued. That had the tendency to hasten the retreat, and no man stood on the order of his going, but got up and "dusted" in double-quick time.

Tom held on to his rifle, and was not the last man to get out of the hut. He didn't care to tackle a bear in such close quarters as those. He preferred the open air, where he could get some elbow-room.

"Boom! boom!" cried the Esquimaux, terribly excited, as their dogs were still yelping and uttering cries of pain and terror down under the snow—at least the most of them were.

But the dogs soon got out, until all were counted except one.

"The bear is eating him," said the bo'son, "for I hear him growling and crunching the bones."

"I wish I could get a shot at him," said Tom, looking towards the spot where the monster had crushed down through the top of the snow hut.

"Better wait till he comes out for another dog," suggested Ned Truxton.

"He'll lay down and take a nap on the blankets when he gets through his dinner," said the interpreter. "It's a good warm place, and the dog will just make a good meal for him."

"Well, that doesn't suit me," said Ned's companion, a sailor, who had been so unfortunate as to have his coat off at the time. He was now shivering like an aspen in the cold. "I want my coat and blanket, or I'll freeze to death in an hour."

"That's so," said Tom. "I'll see if I can't get a shot at him while he is eating that dog. Maybe he won't leave his meal to attack me," and Tom started toward the dangerous locality.

"Look out there, now!" called out the bo'son. "You don't know where he will turn up."

"I know where he is," was the reply, as the daring young sailor crept cautiously forward.

The bear was greedily devouring the dog, having been a long time without a square meal perhaps.

Tom crept forward almost to the edge of the place, the thick, frozen crust of the snow sustaining his weight, and peered over into the dangerous hole. He could see the bear eagerly devouring his meal, and waited for a good chance to put a bullet into his eye.

"I'm afraid to shoot at the back of his head," said Tom to himself. "Their skulls are so hard the bullet may glance off and then he would come for me like a mad hornet. I'll make a noise that will attract his attention, and then see if I can't get at his eye."

With that he yelled.

The bear suddenly looked around, showing his bloody fangs, and uttered a fierce growl.

Tom took a quick and sure aim, and pulled the trigger.

A frightful roar burst from the beast, who sprang up and threw a cloud of snow about him.

"Come away—come away! Sheer off, lad!" cried the bo'son, and Tom, fearful his aim had not been accurate, darted away, running a hundred yards, when he stopped and quickly reloaded the gun.

On seeing him run the entire party incontinently took to their heels, and ran to the top of a hill at least a half mile away ere they stopped.

With the gun reloaded Tom retraced his footsteps, and cautiously approached to reconnoiter. The bear was still growling and throwing up the loose snow, but did not make his appearance above the crust of the snow.

The nature of the growls, however, convinced Tom that the bear was hard hit, and not dangerous unless one was so foolish as to get within striking distance of him. He therefore crept forward and found the monster lying on his side, half buried in snow, occasionally kicking and growling.

"Ah! my aim was true," he exclaimed, and taking off his cap he waved it above his head, and cried out to his comrades:

"All right, mates! I've got him!"

The entire party gave a rousing three times three, and started in a run for the spot.

The Esquimaux were particularly anxious to get some of the fresh meat to eat. They were hungry—very hungry, in fact, and to satisfy their appetite was the first thing they thought of.

They uttered peculiar cries of satisfaction, and went to work getting out the meat for the feast.

"We want to save that skin," said the bo'son to the interpreter. "Tell 'em not to cut it any more than is necessary to get at the meat."

"Tell 'em to take the skin off first," suggested Tom.

He did so, and the hungry, eager natives soon had the heavy, fleecy skin off and lying upon the crust of the snow.

Then commenced the bloody feast. The natives cared not for blood. They seemed to like it, and drank it like water, to the great disgust of the whites.

"Here, this is too cold," said the bo'son; "let's get out those sledges, and get ready to go back to the ship."

"Let's go down into the other hut first, and get out our things," said the man who had left his coat behind when he retreated.

The suggestion was acted upon and the things were brought out.

The coatless man got into his coat and then wrapped two blankets around him, shivering until it seemed as though his teeth would be shaken out of his head.

By the time two of the sledges were gotten out the Esquimaux had gorged themselves with the raw bear-meat.

To their dismay, Tom and the bo'son gave the dogs a square meal of the meat. The half famished animals eagerly devoured it. Their usual feed is hard frozen pieces of walrus hide, which nothing but the stomach of an Esquimaux dog could digest.

The bo'son told them to get out the other

sledge, put in the meat and bear-skin, and make haste to reach the ship.

They obeyed because they dared not do otherwise, and in a half hour they were ready to start.

"Ah! this is good traveling!" cried Tom, as he struck out in the direction of the ship. The hard crust on the snow enabled them to make good time.

The Esquimaux were satisfied, because their bellies were full and the remains of the big bear would last them many a day. They laughed, and jabbered, and yelled at their dogs with unusual good nature.

Mile after mile were passed, and soon the masts of the *Jeannette* were seen in the distance.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Tom, and the others followed with hearty cheers, at the sight of the dear old ship.

"Great Neptune!" exclaimed the bo'son, "there goes two big bears across the ice within sight of the ship!"

"We ought to get them!" cried Tom; "that would give us fresh meat enough to last a month, to say nothing of their skins."

"They may not care to let us have their meat," said Truxton, who had no weapon other than his revolver. He didn't care to molest them.

"Oh, we won't ask their consent to that," said Tom, smiling.

"By the great sea serpent!" cried one of the party, "they smell the blood of the meat in the sledges, and are coming straight for us!"

So they were.

The smell of the fresh blood had aroused the savage appetites of the beasts, and being perfectly fearless, they turned and trotted slowly toward the party, sniffing the air as they came.

"Quick, bo'son!" cried Tom, turning to him; "take the other gun and stand by me. They never attack without rising on their hind feet. When they rise on their haunches, take good aim and let them have it right in the eye."

"I ain't much of a shot, lad," said the bo'son.

"What shall I do if I miss?"

"Run like forked lightning," was the reply. "But keep cool and take good aim, and you'll fetch him."

The others took to their heels, leaving the two daring friends to face the danger together.

CHAPTER XX.

TWO BEARS AT ONCE—WINTER.

THE bo'son was naturally a brave man. He had often faced danger unflinchingly. But, as he saw those two monster bears approaching, every story he had ever heard of their great strength and savage ferocity passed rapidly through his mind.

Tom had gotten used to bears since he had entered the Arctic regions, and didn't mind meeting them whenever he had his gun along with him. Common sense as well as experience had taught him that a bullet in the brain will kill the greatest and most savage of the animal kingdom. He had made it a rule, therefore, to wait till he could be sure of putting a bullet there before he fired.

"Bo'son," he said, "a little bullet in the eye is more than any bear can stand. Yet their heads are so hard that you must hit either the eye or ear in order to make sure of them. When he rises on his hind feet and growls at you, take good aim at his eye—the one nearest to you—and pull the trigger. Keep cool, and hold a steady hand!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the brave old salt.

The two monsters came steadily toward them, snuffing the air with savage snorts and grunts.

When within some twenty feet of our two heroes, they both arose on their haunches and growled fiercely at them.

"Take good aim, bo'son!" said Tom, raising his rifle to his shoulder. "Let him have it at the word three; one—two—bang!"

Both guns went off as one piece, and the next moment the hideous roars of the two monsters were heard on board the *Jeannette*, four miles distant.

They rolled over on the snow, striking with their great paws and sharp claws with such force as to break the crust. Another minute and they disappeared from sight under the snow.

"Hurrah for the bo'son!" cried Tom, throwing his cap in the air.

"Hurrah for the lad!" cried the bo'son in return, "the bravest that ever reefed a sail."

"But this is your first bear, bo'son," said Tom, grasping his old friend's hand.

"So it is lad; but I'm not a lubber, you know."

"Of course not. Lubbers are more use to bears than we are."

"Well, we got 'em, anyhow, and don't you think they may come up again?"

"Don't know. They are bad customers. Let's load up and be ready for anything."

They quickly reloaded their guns, and then turned and waved their caps at their mates and the Esquimaux.

The look-out on the *Jeannette* had seen the encounter, and it caused considerable excitement on board.

Captain De Long sent a dozen men to help bring in the prizes. They were all anxious to get the fresh meat, and, therefore, hastened all the more readily to the assistance of the bo'son's party.

The natives and the rest of the party came running back as fast as their heels could carry them, and were in the highest spirits imaginable. The Esquimaux thought the meat would all belong to the party, and that a huge supply would be given to them for the use of their sledges, and at once began to take possession of the dead bears.

"Hold on there!" cried Tom.

"Avast there, you lubbers!" yelled the bo'son. "Tell 'em not to cut those skins."

The interpreter told them that the skins must first be taken off before any meat was cut.

They went cheerfully to work, however, and took off the skins, taking many a slice of meat for themselves the while. Tom nor the bo'son did not care; they only wanted to prevent another bloody feast on raw meat.

By the time the relief party from the ship came up the skins were removed from the carcasses. Tom and two or three others then got down and cut up the meat. The great hams were lifted up and placed on the sledges. Great slices of the side meat were cut off and given to the dogs, who seemed to have ravenous appetites.

"Blow me, if they don't eat like sharks," said the old bo'son, as he looked on their ravenous eating.

"They could eat up a whole bear if turned loose on him," remarked Ned Truxton.

"They'd eat a man just as quick if they found him dead," said the interpreter. "They have been known to eat up a sledge, which is made of walrus hide. Everything they can eat is placed out of their reach."

"I guess they've had more to-day than ever before in their lives."

"Of course they have. They are always hungry."

The meat and skins loaded the sledges to their utmost capacity. When all was put on, they were started off toward the ship at a brisk trot.

The ship was soon reached. The crew received them with cheers.

"That was well done, bo'son," Captain de Long said, "that fight with the bears."

"Shiver my timbers, cap'en!" said the old salt. "It wasn't a fight at all. It was a murder out and out."

The captain laughed.

"I would like to see such a murder every day," he said. "It would keep us in fresh meat and oil."

"So it would. If we had two or three sledges and dogs on hand all the time we could go out after bears every day."

"They couldn't be found every day, I fear. Besides, they are dangerous animals, and one should let them alone unless he is out of meat."

"But the bears won't let a fellow alone, sir," said the bo'son, and then he told how a huge polar bear had crushed through the top of a snow hut, and ate the Esquimaux dogs.

The story excited the greatest interest on board, and Tom and others had to repeat it a dozen times to the crew.

The Esquimaux who had lost a dog now called the interpreter, and demanded the price of the dog.

Captain de Long paid him promptly, because he wanted to win their confidence and good will.

The dogs were taken on board, and tied where they would not eat the ropes or empty the buckets of slush, while their owners were made as comfortable as possible.

That day they all indulged in bearsteaks, and relished the change from pemmican and hard tack. Captain de Long, after mature thought on the subject, concluded to spend the winter quietly on shipboard, and wait for the breaking up of the ice in the spring, at which time he hoped to get the *Jeannette* out of the ice-pack, and cruise still further forth in search of the open polar sea.

To go over the deep snow and run the risk of being overwhelmed in an avalanche of snow was more than he thought he ought to do under the circumstances.

He accordingly gave the Esquimaux a liberal supply of meat and a few trinkets, made them promise to return in the spring with good sledges and dogs, and then sent them away.

The natives were delighted with their treatment, and promised to return again soon.

"Now we will settle down for the winter," said the captain. "A night of four months is coming on, and the cold will be greater than we ever dreamed of. We have both fuel and provisions

enough, and need not have any fears as to freezing or starving. If the doctor can keep us well we will pull through all right."

"I think the health of the crew is very good just now," said the ship's surgeon, "and it promises to remain so."

The interior of the ship was then arranged like a house for the winter. Stoves were put up, and a certain amount of coal was to be burned every twenty-four hours. The three bears yielded a considerable quantity of oil, which would answer for fuel when the coal should be exhausted.

The sun went several degrees below the horizon, and a twilight came on. A few stars were seen. It never gets dark up there, for the sun is only a few degrees below the horizon, but oh, so cold. Everything begins to freeze up, and universal winter prevails.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FIGHT.

THE main business of every one on board the *Jeannette* during the winter was to kill time and keep warm. Time hung heavy on their hands, of course, and every game that could be devised to pass it away was drawn upon. Tom passed many an hour trying to teach the young white bear cub to be lively and playful.

But white bears are not like the ordinary black bear.

The black bear will become as tame as a dog and as playful as a kitten. They will grow to love any one, and follow their owner about everywhere.

But not so with the white bear. He seems to hate everything and everybody, and manifests a disposition to want to destroy and eat everything in the way of flesh. He will not become playful, but is always pugnacious and ready for a fight.

The young cub received all his advances with growls and spiteful scratches. Under no circumstances could Tom get into his good graces. He wouldn't be sociable.

"Well, you won't be friendly," said Tom, one day, after fruitless efforts to teach him a few tricks. "It's your own fault, not mine. You have a good home and a fine chance if you only knew it. I'll take you home with us and give you to the sweetest girl in New York. Maybe you'll be more agreeable in her company. I am always so myself," and with that Tom walked away and left the cub to himself.

The long winter finally passed and the sun began to creep up toward the horizon again. But for weeks it barely peeped out of the water or above the low range of hills. It seemed the longest sunrise they had ever seen.

At last the ice seemed to be yielding to the influence of the sun, for it began to melt. The snow began to fade away, though it was slow, very slow in going.

The Esquimaux had reported that the ship had plenty of bear meat and oil, and the result was that every few days a little party of them would come to the ship and pretend to be suffering the most abject poverty.

Captain de Long gave them a little each time and sent them away. But they would come again and again, until at last he had to refuse to give anything.

"We will have to feed the whole Arctic population," he said, one day, "if we don't put a stop to it and prohibit their coming on board the ship."

One day Tom took his gun and strolled off over to the land for the purpose of getting a shot at a beautiful silver-gray fox he had seen through the ship's glass from the lookout aloft.

He was very anxious to get the beautiful skin of the animal, and went round so as to keep a small-sized iceberg between him and the fox, so as to not alarm the game.

But as he rounded the berg he saw the timid animal scamper away—not over the hill—but around it.

"Hang the luck!" he growled. "I would give a month's wages for that fellow's skin. I'll follow and see where he goes, anyway. Maybe I can get a shot at him yet."

He got to the shore and pushed his way around the hill—the way he had seen the fox go, and had gone about a half mile, when he saw a party of Esquimaux trailing the same animal.

"Ah! They'll run him to his den and get him," he said. "I'll see if I can't kill him for them, and get the skin for my share."

With that idea in view he pushed on, and had followed the Esquimaux some two or three miles before they knew it.

They seemed to be very greatly excited when they saw him, and held a consultation.

"They'll like to have 'boom' do the work for

them," said Tom, quickening his pace so as to catch up with them as soon as possible.

"How do?" he said, on coming up with them.

"Huk! Huk!" they answered, and then commenced a rapid jabbering among themselves again.

There were seven of them.

Tom recognized one of them as the rascal he had knocked down one day on the deck of the *Jeannette* for having deserted him in the snow fifteen miles from the ship. He noticed a dark, malicious frown on his face, and at once suspected that something was wrong.

"I must look out for these fellows," he muttered to himself; "they mean mischief, and are treacherous enough to do anything."

Suddenly two or three of them turned to him with very smiling countenances and said, by many grimaces and signs, that they were glad to see him. They even shook hands with him, and asked if he could kill them a bear with the "boom," as they called his gun.

He said he could and would be glad to oblige them.

But he kept his eye furtively on the man he had once knocked down. He saw him get his harpoon ready and walk around so as to get behind his back.

The Esquimaux never faces his enemy. He patiently waits till he can get a chance to give him a death blow behind his back.

Tom had heard of that national characteristic, and so kept his eyes about him.

Taking a small round pocket-mirror from his pocket, which every sailor generally carries with him wherever he goes, he held it so as to keep up with the movements of the villain. He saw him quickly aim his harpoon at his back and throw it.

Quick as a flash Tom leapt aside. The harpoon just grazed him, but it found a fatal lodgment in the stomach of the one the Esquimaux, who was trying to hold the intended victim's attention.

A howl of pain escaped the poor fellow, and he rolled over on the ground in the agonies of death. Consternation seized upon the others, and the treacherous wretch seemed too much dismayed to move hand or foot or utter a word.

Tom glared at him, and the rascal returned his gaze in a way that plainly said:

"What a blunder! I'm a fool and ought to be kicked!"

"You coppery, cowardly piece of treachery!" hissed Tom. "I'm almost in the mind to put a bullet through you!"

But instead of that he rushed forward and dealt him a tremendous blow in the face with his clenched fist, knocking him heels over head.

The fellow set up a howling that might have been heard a mile away. To Tom's surprise the others did not hold the fellow responsible for the fatal wounding of their companion. They seemed to think Tom was to blame for it, and began to gather their harpoons for the purpose of making a combined attack on him.

"O-ho! that's the game, is it!" he cried, drawing his revolver and springing aside so that none of them could get behind him. "Well, I'll show you how two can play at it. Stand back now, and look out for yourselves."

The six natives, believing that they could easily overcome him, commenced crowding forward.

One threw his harpoon.

Tom dodged it.

The next moment he let the fellow who threw it have a bullet in his belly.

Jerusalem! how he howled.

Whiz went another harpoon; this time from the wretch who threw the other behind his back.

"Ah! I'll give you something to do, my fine fellow," said Tom, and taking a deliberate aim let him have a ball in his chest.

He, too, went down, howling like a wolf with his foot in a steel trap.

That left only four.

But those four were completely demoralized. They threw down their harpoons and dropped on their hands and knees, crying:

"Akka! Akka!"

"You ought to have your brains blown out!" said Tom. "But I guess you have enough to make you know how to let white men alone here after."

"Akka! Akka!" they still cried, crawling toward him on their hands and knees.

"Back! Back! Don't get near me!" cried Tom. "You are too treacherous for me to put any faith in you!"

"Akka! Akka!"

"No 'akka' for me, if you please," he said, backing away from the four men.

Suddenly they stopped, and Tom looked to see what move they would next make.

They turned back, as if to respond to the call of one of the dying Esquimaux. They all four knelt around him.

"That's the last time he will ever cast a har-

"poor," muttered Tom. "He's going where there'll be no icebergs or winter snows. These treacherous fellows surely can't have any Heaven. When a fellow lives in such a frozen country as this he ought to go to a warm country when he dies. I am sorry to have to do this, but—"

A rifle shot from the sharp brow of the hill behind him was heard, and the next moment Tom reeled forward and fell heavily to the earth.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MYSTERIOUS SHOT.

THE reader will doubtless recollect the position of our hero at the end of the preceding chapter. A rifle shot had been heard, and Tom had staggered forward a few paces and fallen to the ground.

He was, to all appearances, dead. Blood flowed freely from a wound on his head.

The Esquimaux were astonished at the sudden and unexpected fall of their enemy, and looked around to see whence came the shot that had so well avenged them.

They could see no one.

They well knew the shot had come from over the crest of the hill, just back of where Tom had stood, but were afraid to go forward and investigate it.

They believed, however, that the death of their comrades had been avenged, and made haste to tell it to the dying Esquimaux.

One of them ran forward and took up Tom's gun, with which he ran back to one of the dying men and showed it to him as evidence that he was avenged.

The Esquimaux seemed to die content, and in a few minutes breathed his last. The other one lingered nearly an hour, and then yielded up the ghost.

By that time a change had taken place.

Tom was not dead.

On the contrary, he was alive and doing some tall thinking.

A bullet had grazed his head so closely as to cut an ugly gash in his scalp and completely stun him.

He lay there unconscious for over ten minutes. By that time he had partially regained his senses.

He raised his head and looked around.

The Esquimaux had his gun and were kneeling around their two dying comrades. They did not see him move.

He placed his hand on his revolver and saw that it was all right and ready for use.

Placing his hand on his head, he saw that it was bleeding freely from a wound.

"Somebody shot me," he muttered to himself. "These people have no fire-arms. No one was near enough behind me to strike me. I don't understand it at all. I'm losing a great deal of blood. I'll wait a while, though, and see what they will do. They've got my gun, and I will not leave without it. Ah! that treacherous shot came from behind that hill up there!"

Just then one of the Esquimaux looked in his direction. He laid his head down so as to enable him to keep an eye on them. The native turned again to his comrades, and Tom began again to gather his wits and look about him.

By and by he saw that both the wounded Esquimaux were dead.

The survivors at once began preparations to remove their bodies to the sledges farther down the hill.

At last they came toward him.

He drew his revolver and sprang to his feet.

A more astounded quartet of men was never seen. His bloody appearance and fierce aspect completely demoralized them.

With a combined howl of dismay they dropped his gun, and sprang down the hill toward their sledges with a speed never before equaled by Esquimaux.

Into the sledges they scrambled, and then the dogs were off as though all the polar bears in the Arctic regions were after them.

Tom did not attempt to further molest them. He had no desire to at that moment.

"I'm glad to get rid of them," he said, as he gazed at the sledges, fast disappearing in the distance. "But I'd like to know where that shot came from."

Taking up his cap, which had fallen to the ground, he examined it and found a bullet hole in two places in it.

"Blast my binnacle!" he exclaimed, glaring around him. "I'll find out about this, and see if two can't play at the game."

Taking up his rifle, and reloading the empty chambers of his revolver, he turned in the direction of the abrupt crest of the hill, which he had his back to when he was shot.

Just over the crest he found foot-prints.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "It's a white man! Whoever it was he had on shoes very much like my own! He came from down that way," pointing

in an opposite direction from the ship, the tall masts of which he could see from the crest of the hill.

His eyes followed the tracks as they pointed in a southerly direction. They were plainly visible, for the melting snow and ice made the earth soft and yielding.

"There was only one person," he muttered to himself, "but who can that one be? Can it be possible that a white man is in this region alone, and at war with his own race and color? It is not a native, for a native does not plant his foot that way. A native has no gun—no ammunition; wouldn't know how to use one if he had it. I wonder if I ought to follow these tracks and see where they go? I will try it, and see if I can unravel the mystery."

He followed the tracks down the hill and beyond, keeping behind the range so that the masts of the *Jeannette* could not be seen.

Mile after mile was traveled, and still the trail was clearly defined.

"He must live somewhere south of this place," said Tom to himself, "as he takes a straight southerly course. I'll keep it up, though, and see where it leads to."

When some six or seven miles from the ship the trail suddenly turned toward the water and disappeared altogether on a field of smooth ice. Not a vestige of it could he detect on the glassy surface of the ice, which stretched away for miles.

"This is the end of it," said Tom. "I might find it, and I might not. I would have to walk many a weary mile, and then not find it. I have no provisions with me, and am very thirsty from loss of blood. I'll go back and let the doctor examine my wound and dress it. But I'll find that fellow if I have to hunt all around the North Pole for him."

Tom retraced his footsteps, and slowly made his way back toward the ship. On the way he shot several ducks, and lost two or three hours in getting them. But he got them at last, and resumed his tramp.

When he reached the ship he found all hands asleep except the watch, as night had come on—by the clock—and the crew had turned in.

"Shiver my timbers, lad!" exclaimed the watch, "what has happened to you?"

"I had a fight with some Esquimaux," he replied, "and got a scratch from one of them. Don't say anything about it to any one, as the captain would not like it. He wants to keep friendly with them, you know."

"But how was it? Did they attack you?"

"Yes; that fellow I knocked down on deck here one day, you remember. It was his gang. They wanted to harpoon me as soon as they saw me, but I wouldn't have it. I gave them some of the cargo of this," tapping his revolver, "and sent two of them where there is no more ice."

"Killed two?"

"Yes; as dead as smoked herring."

"Did you see Ned Truxton?"

"No; where is he?"

"In his berth; he came aboard an hour ago and went to his berth. He went out with his gun to help you get that fox, but said he couldn't find you."

"Great God!" exclaimed Tom, in blank amazement.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I wish I could have seen him," and with that he turned away and walked over to the cook's galley, where he tossed the dead ducks down on the floor and went back towards the cabin.

Getting a basin of water, he proceeded to wash the blood from the wound on his head, so as to get at it and ascertain the extent of the damage done.

The washing away of the congealed blood caused the wound to bleed afresh. He grew weak from the loss of blood.

"Tell the surgeon to come here," he asked of the watch.

The watch went to the surgeon's berth and awoke him, whispering:

"Tom has come aboard badly wounded, and wants to see you, doctor."

The surgeon sprang up and was dressed in five minutes, and hurried upon deck.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GHOST ON THE "JEANNETTE."

"WHY, Tom, my boy!" the surgeon exclaimed, "what in the world is the matter? How did this happen?"

"I met that Esquimaux I knocked down on deck here last fall," replied Tom. "There were seven of them. They wanted to harpoon me. I wouldn't have it. A fight was the result."

"And you got hurt, I see. Let me see what the damage is."

The surgeon examined the wound, and said:

"It was a close rub, Tom."

"Yes—I thought I was off for Davy Jones'," replied Tom.

"Did any of the others get hurt?"

"I believe so. They carried away three dead ones in their sledges."

"Great Neptune! Three of them!"

"I only killed two," innocently remarked Tom. "The other fellow received a harpoon in his belly that was intended for my back, and that's what ailed him."

The doctor smiled audibly and continued the examination.

"Tom," he said, "what kind of a weapon was it that made this wound?"

Tom picked up his cap and showed the two bullet holes in it.

"Why, hang it!" exclaimed the surgeon, his face expressing the greatest surprise, "these are bullet holes!"

"I believe you are right, doctor," was Tom's reply.

"Who fired at you?"

"That's what I would like to know myself," he replied. "Something took me from behind, when I knew there was no native behind me, for I had them all in front of me at the time. It laid me out for a time. I finally recovered in time to keep from being cut up by the Esquimaux who were placing their dead in the sledges. When I got on my feet, with my revolver in my hand, they jumped into their sledges and got off as fast as their dogs could travel."

"Did you see no one but natives?"

"No. I found a man's tracks just over the crest of a hill, and that was behind me at the time. Whoever he was he had on shoes like mine, and his step like a white man's."

"Why didn't you follow it?"

"I did, some five or six miles, and then lost it on a field of smooth ice. I had to come back to see how much hurt I was. How is it, doctor?"

"Oh, you are all right. It's only a flesh wound. It will be quite painful for several days, however. This thing ought to be investigated by Captain De Long."

"Don't say anything about it, doctor, till tomorrow morning. I want to turn in and get some sleep, you know."

"All right. I'll wait till after roll call and then speak to the captain about it. I don't think we ought to keep it from him, as it may have some bearing on the welfare of the crew."

Tom thanked the doctor, and then had it well dressed and bandaged. His cap fitted down over the bandage so well as to conceal it altogether.

He then retired to his berth and gave himself up to silent reflection.

"Ned Truxton is trying to kill me," was the thought that assumed shape in words as he laid his wounded head on his pillow. "He gave me a push that sent me in on that bear in the ice cavern, and then ran away to leave me to the bear. There was no other bear in sight. He led them to another place, and told them I had fallen in there with a bear. This is a still plainer case. What's he got against me? I never harmed him in my life. I never knew him till we met on board the *Jeannette*. I am quite sure it was he. I'll watch him closely tomorrow and see if he is any more surprised at seeing me than the others are. Ah! hanged if I don't go to his berth now in a white sheet and see what effect it will have on him!"

Tom smiled as the thought flitted through his mind. He arose and took the sheet off his bed, wrapped it around him, and crept softly forward toward the berth occupied by Ned Truxton.

Ned was in a restless, uneasy sleep, and at times he would mutter unintelligible words.

Tom stopped and looked at him several minutes before attempting to wake him. He thought he could see a careworn, uneasy look in his face.

At last, drawing the sheet well up around his neck, he called in a hoarse, sepulchral voice:

"Ned Truxton! Ned Truxton!"

"Ugh! eh—who's that?" demanded Ned, springing up and glaring wildly around.

"I am Tom, whom you—!"

"Oh Lord—oh—o-o-h—oh! God have mercy on me!" groaned Ned, rolling out of his berth and dropping on his knees on the floor.

"God will not have mercy on a wretch like you," said Tom, still keeping up the grave-like tone of voice. "Unless you repent, I will haunt you every time you close your eyes in sleep, until you are punished for my murder. Why did you shoot me?"

"It was—an—accident!" stammered Ned.

"It was you, then?"

"Yes—yes—yes—it was an accident. Oh, don't haunt me, Tom!"

"You infernal, treacherous wretch!" hissed Tom, throwing aside the sheet, and confronting the astounded would-be murderer. "I am not dead by a long sight, but that's no fault of yours."

"I only wanted to make sure you were the scoundrel who shot at me!"

Ned sprang to his feet and hissed through his clenched teeth:

"You did frighten me, for I've been afraid of ghosts all my life. But you are mistaken. I never shot at you in my life. I am almost tempted to shoot you for playing this trick on me. I will, if you try it on again."

"That won't do, Ned," said Tom. "You can't get out of it that way. I followed your tracks from that hill. I have witnesses to your confession. You are a prisoner."

Ned Truxton winced and looked uneasy.

"I have done you no harm, Tom, and you have no right to play this mean game on me."

Just then a half dozen of the crew, who had been awakened by the first cry of alarm, and who heard Ned's frightened confession, crowded around them and asked:

"What's the matter, mates?"

"Tom played ghost on me," said Ned, quickly, "and scared me out of a year's growth."

"Yes," said Tom, significantly, "I think I will stop your growth altogether, Ned Truxton," and then he left and went away to his own berth.

Ned explained to the others that Tom had wrapped a sheet around him and came prowling around his berth talking in a hoarse voice, as ghosts are supposed to talk, and awoke him.

"I am afraid of ghosts," said Ned, "and on suddenly waking up I thought it was a ghost standing over me. I never was so frightened in my life."

Now, all sailors are superstitious and believe in the supernatural. The idea of ghostly apparitions has always been accepted by them. Hence the crew went back to their berths believing that Tom had played a practical joke on Ned, and made him shake in his skin like a bag full of dry bones.

Tom went to his berth and rolled in, chuckling over the success of his scheme to make Ned confess to having shot him.

On the other hand, Ned lay in his berth inwardly swearing at his ill luck, and cursing Tom for the trick he had played him.

"If he accuses me to the captain," he muttered, "I'll shoot him before the whole crew, and give them something to hang me for. He can't swear that I did it. No one saw me, and what I said when he frightened me is no good. He had no right to do that, and it is not worth anything against me."

Ned had a great deal of nerve, and so resolved to face the thing bravely if Tom accused him. He knew that no one saw him, not even the Esquimaux, and therefore it could not be proven on him.

"I thought I had him that time, and that the Esquimaux would mutilate his body and strip it of clothing and leave it for the bears. It's another miss. Will I ever succeed? If he gets back to New York, my chances are gone forever, and then life will not be worth living."

They all rolled out at 7 o'clock and had breakfast.

Captain De Long saw the bandage on Tom's head, and asked:

"What's the matter, Tom?"

"Hurt!" was the reply.

"Much?"

"No, sir. The doctor says it doesn't amount to much."

The captain looked at the surgeon, and was about to inquire about it, when the latter said:

"A scratch, captain. Let's eat these ducks, and I will tell you about it afterwards. I am really quite hungry now."

"I have a good appetite myself," said the captain, "and hope there are ducks enough to go around."

After breakfast the doctor told the captain about Tom's wound. The gallant officer was astounded. He sent for Tom, and Tom gave his reasons why he was positive that Ned Truxton had fired the shot.

"Why should he want to kill you?" the captain asked.

"Indeed, I don't know; I never saw him till I came on board the *Jeannette*. I never had any words with him; and now I'll tell you all about that bear story when I was lost last year."

And he explained how Tom had pushed him into the cave on the bear and ran away, afterwards piloting the crew to a spot where he had not been. He then told about the rifle shot, and the shoe tracks on the soft earth. Ned was out with a gun at the same time. The confession of the latter, when Tom played the ghost on him, confirmed the whole thing.

Captain De Long called for his second in command, and ordered him to take Ned Truxton into custody, and confine him in the hold.

Ned was thunderstruck.

He protested his innocence, but it did no good. He was put in irons and carried below.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

A FEW days after Ned Truxton was put in irons a gale of wind came and scattered the ice-pack in which the *Jeannette* had been held so long. To the great joy of all on board, the vessel floated in the water with only a large cake of ice stuck to her larboard side.

That was soon cut loose, and the gallant vessel floated once more unencumbered.

Icebergs were all around them, but every man in that crew was a skillful seaman. The vessel was guided through them till she reached the open sea, when she once more turned northward, going past Wrangel Land.

Captain De Long was a brave, dauntless explorer. He had an ambition to go farther North than any other Arctic explorer had yet gone, and therefore pushed boldly on toward that mythical pole so much written and talked about in every age of the world. Some of the crew turned pale when they saw that the course of the vessel was still northward. But they had come to make everything go as ordered, so they said nothing, but obeyed orders, like good sailors always should do.

The farther they went the more numerous and larger the icebergs became. They were literally mountains of ice, sometimes reaching hundreds of feet out of the water, and thousands in the water.

They reached islands never before discovered, and were about one hundred and fifty miles northeast of New Siberia Island, when the icebergs seemed to be angry at the gallant little vessel having invaded their mighty solitude. On every hand they abounded, and frequently came together with a crash that might have been heard fifty miles away.

At one time the *Jeannette* had to escape by running the gauntlet between two immense fields of ice that were slowly coming together.

The channel grew narrower every minute, and it seemed as if the gallant vessel would be caught. But the end of the channel was seen, and every sail and inch of steam were put on to rush her through.

Just as the ice began to scrape her on both sides the ship glided out into clear water, and a few minutes later the two fields of ice came slowly together.

Everything in regard to icebergs is slow, but there is a strength about their movements that is truly frightful.

The two fields of ice, as if impelled by some irresistible power, ground against each other until the noise of the snapping and breaking of the ice was like the artillery of a great battle-field.

"I don't want to be caught between two icebergs," said the bo'son, shaking his head as he listened to the roar of the breaking ice.

"Did you ever know a man who did?" Tom asked.

"No, I think not. But do you know, I feel that we'll get caught in one yet!"

"What makes you think so, bo'son?"

"The captain is a daring man," replied the old salt, "and these old icebergs are after him. They seem to follow us all round, moving silently about, waiting for a chance to nip us. Every time we undertake to pass between a couple of them they try to run together and nip us. I tell you, lad, they'll get us yet. I think we are too far north. Hanged if I don't believe we've passed the North Pole, but I guess the old thing has rotted down so we didn't see it."

"Well, I hope we won't get caught between any two of them, for we'd be ground to powder if we do."

"Of course we would. Now, look at that fellow out there; he's laying for us like a shark watching a South Sea Islander in swimming."

Tom thought the old bo'son's imagination had conjured up the idea of the icebergs trying to nip the vessel. He noticed, however, that the ship was frequently compelled to make extra speed to keep from being caught between two of the monsters.

One day the icebergs were more numerous than usual, and the *Jeannette* several times came very near being nipped.

She slipped in and out among them very adroitly for many hours. Constant vigilance was necessary to save them, but at last they found themselves where they could neither go forward nor backward.

Three icebergs were coming together. A field of ice lay at the base of one of them.

"My God!" cried the bo'son, "the ship is doomed!"

"Crash! crash!" and the *Jeannette* was a mere wreck between two solid bergs. Two of the crew were killed; one of whom was Ned Truxton.

Captain De Long was as cool as the ice itself in the midst of the awful calamity. He sprang to the forward part of the ship, and called out:

"Man the boats, men, and put in all the provisions you can."

The three life-boats, or rather whale-boats, were lowered on the ice and filled with provisions and everything necessary to make life endurable in an open boat in that latitude.

"Keep them in secure position," cried the captain. "When the ice parts the ship will go to the bottom like a stone."

But the ice did not part, and several days were spent in taking off such things as they would need.

Captain De Long consulted his charts, and found that the nearest spot where they could have a chance of communicating with the civilized world was the Lena River, in Northern Siberia, the mouth of which was 700 miles distant. They would probably have to ascend 700 miles further in order to reach a settlement of inhabitants.

In open boats in an Arctic sea that seemed like an impossible undertaking.

How could open boats dodge in and out among icebergs without being crushed? It really looked as though the fate of Sir John Franklin would be theirs.

But Captain De Long imbued the men with his own indomitable spirit, and they pulled at the oars till the perspiration rolled down their bodies and their cheeks glowed with the ruddy color of health.

Several days after they took to the boats a gale came up and sent them whirling among icebergs and in blinding sheets of snow.

When it ceased all three of the boats were so scattered that neither one could find the other.

Tom and the bo'son, with Lieutenant Dannenhauer, were in the third boat, with four others of the crew. They pulled at the oars incessantly to keep from freezing.

They touched New Siberia Island, but that being little more than a stationary iceberg, they pushed on for their first objective point—the mouth of the Lena River, in Northeastern Siberia.

Days, weeks, and months passed, and still the same indomitable pluck was pulling at the oars.

At last they reached the mouth of the great river.

"Saved! saved!" they cried.

"Eight hundred miles yet to go by boat!" said Dannenhauer, the captain of the boat; "and up stream all the way at that."

They pulled away with a hearty good will. They were out of the way of icebergs, the terror of the Arctic sea. Weeks passed, and at last they reached the Russian town of Irkutsk, where they made themselves known to the people.

Lieutenant Dannenhauer was carried before the Russian Governor of the town. He managed to make that functionary understand the situation. The Governor sent a messenger eight hundred miles to the nearest telegraph station to telegraph the news to St. Petersburg. From St. Petersburg the whole civilized world was electrified with the news that the *Jeannette* was crushed in the ice, and two out of the three boats containing the crew were safe in the river Lena, at Irkutsk, in Russian Siberia, whence it would take them many months to return.

The Russian Governor, under instructions from St. Petersburg, made our heroes comfortable, and sent them forward by wagon toward the capital of the Russian Empire. It was over two thousand miles to go by slow stages, but our heroes bore it patiently and enjoyed themselves as best they could.

From St. Petersburg, where they were received with every demonstration of honor, they made a quick passage to Paris, thence to Liverpool, where they embarked for New York.

When they reached New York, thousands assembled on the docks to welcome them back.

Among them was Benny Havens, the young newsboy Tom had helped along till he could do for himself. He was now a young lawyer, making money and reputation fast. Nellie Havens was with him, a beautiful young lady of eighteen now.

Tom recognized Ben by his limp.

"Benny!" he cried. "How are you, Cully?" using the old New York street slang.

"Just bully, Tom," replied Benny, grasping the hand of his benefactor as the tears gushed from his eyes. "I'm glad to see you. Come home with us. This is Nellie."

Tom looked at Nellie. Her radiant beauty staggered him for a moment.

"Dear Tom," she said, extending her hand, "I'm so glad you have come."

"So am I. I didn't dream you would grow up so beautiful, Nellie."

Reader, our story is ended.

You know Tom married Nellie, and that's the end of it.

[THE END.]

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